

# THE DUBLIN REVIEW

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IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

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**Anthony Bertram**

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## EDITORIAL

SOME ten thousand English adults, more or less, have been reconciled during 1954 and become practising Catholics. If this were regarded as a matter of statistics, it would be lost in the calculation of other figures—births, deaths and marriages, immigration and leakage. But for an English convert, or anyone who has ever known one, the fact deserves attention in its own right: because each of these conversions has been an individual crisis. A hundred years ago it was still possible to think of 'the conversion of England' as something that might take place suddenly. Louis Allen, in a recent article in the *Catholic Historical Review*, has described how Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle expected this fulfilment of prophecies made to him personally, and quoted in support 'the common opinion of Catholick Theologians' regarding the *Milennium*. The chiliastic tendency was an individual foible; the hope could be rationally entertained. The Church of England, seen through glasses of a certain colour, was not then obviously much further from Catholic unity than—for instance—the Jacobite Church in South India which has more recently been integrated: and it was not then absurd, though it was already inaccurate, to think of the Church of England as representing England.

Excusable or not, the error was soon made manifest. The 'Papal aggression', the proscription of A.P.U.C., the Roman question and the *Syllabus Errorum*, not to mention the growth of English secularism, all marked or deepened the cleavage of mind and feeling between modern Englishmen and contemporary Catholicism, so that even before Pius IX was dead the wistful longings of the Second Spring were obsolete. The English converts of Leo's reign must have known that they were 'individual cases'. But habits of speech die hard. It comes as a shock to read the bald statement of Dom Bede Griffiths in his recent book, *The Golden String* (Harvill, 12s. 6d.) that our conversion 'cannot be a mass movement. The discovery has to be made by each individual for himself. Each one . . . has to work out his own particular problem.'

Reviewers have been in a difficulty with this admirable autobiography, feeling that it would be *naïf* to praise too highly what

claims to be only one more story of a conversion, yet feeling too that it deserved special treatment (as it does). For it brings back to life the old world of those who were just too young to be in the First World War, recollected now in active middle age: it is the sort of document that the *Apologia* was in 1864, or the *Confessions* about 400. As befits a convert of the reign of Pius XI, Dom Bede honours the books by which he read himself into the truth (the main personal influence was C. S. Lewis)—these make a nostalgic catalogue, different in order perhaps, but much the same in content as several of his Oxford contemporaries might compile. Like Newman and Augustine (among his guides) he seems to have enjoyed exceptional graces of prayer before his submission: like them, he had 'been brought up in habits of independence'.

Another thoroughly sensible conversion story published this winter is Professor O'Meara's *The Young Augustine* (Longmans, 21s.). Here, Newman's record is used (with impeccable judgement) to help in the interpretation of the events of 386. Augustine is presented as a 'once-born' type; his moral shortcomings brought realistically into human scale; the abstractions among which he lived—Manicheism, Neo-Platonism, Donatism—endowed with the substance of scholarly understanding. The book is controversial in many points of detail, but a signal contribution of insular literature to the current centenary of St. Augustine's birth, owing more, perhaps, than the author realized to the English-speaking peoples' innate understanding of its fundamental topic.

# THE ORIGINS OF DEVOTION TO OUR LADY'S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

*By* H. FRANCIS DAVIS

THE history of devotion to the Mother of God is more interesting to the practical English mind than the history of theology. And yet we are not fond of those purely sentimental devotions that are unrelated to theology. There is something very fresh and touching in the forms taken by English mediaeval devotion to both the Mother of God and her husband, St. Joseph. In both these respects, our devotion was unique in that it was based on depths of theology not yet brought clearly to the light in other parts of Christendom. At least this is so with regard to the Mother of God. Not so much research has been spent on English devotion to St. Joseph.

Underlying this English mediaeval Marian devotion, there is a distinct advance in theological understanding of the Christian faith, as the universal Church has since recognized. But what was happening here was not known outside of England for several centuries. If it had been known, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception might have been accepted in the Church universal at an earlier date.

One reason why it was not known was because the English devotion, though based on theology, was not formal theology. There was little or nothing scholastic about it. The treatises that were written on the subject were either works of pure devotion or occasional defences of the feast, and they were during the early period not written by professional theologians.

Here I am concerned with the Immaculate Conception, which aroused the warm enthusiasm of Anglo-Saxons long before anyone in any other part of the world had written anything fully explicit on the subject. I agree that in the Fathers we have several

passages that form 'proof texts', which betray that they did really accept Our Lady's unique original sanctity. But it was not the direct object of their devotion, nor did they write any sort of theological defence. Some day, another story will have to be written of the English origins of devotion to Our Lady's Mediatorship of Grace. Here also, it will certainly be found that, before the time of St. Bernard, Englishmen had a great devotion to her part in the Redemption. And it continued all through the Middle Ages. I have just come across the beautiful mediaeval English manuscript, *A Talking of the Love of God*.<sup>1</sup> Nothing could be more lovely than the intimate way in which the writer joins Mother and Son.

He cured my soul, which was then wounded by the sin of my parents, of Adam and Eve. And I have destroyed it completely. . . . Alas! my dear Lady, alas! what have I done? . . . Holy Lady Mary, mother and virgin, great was the sorrow roused in Your heart, when at Your Son's death You stood so near to Him. . . . You were woe-begone at that time. You looked at His sweet face, Your darling, Your love, piteously hanging on the cross, in the company of thieves. . . . Lady, for that grief which distressed You so painfully, and which You had for Him and He for You of yore, in order to release from grief all who were in it, lead all those to Your bliss for whom He suffered. . . . Help me, Mary, kind queen, lady of heaven, empress and virgin and God's dear mother. Dear lady, to save the sinful Jesus Christ became Your son and bestowed that honour on You. For our sake You, virgin, were made God's mother.<sup>2</sup>

In searching for the origins of devotion to the Conception, I was led to search into the origins of the feast. In other words, before seeing Fr. Van Dijk's article, I was forced to undertake an independent study of some of the questions he has treated. I have nothing but admiration for his article, of course, and it will form the natural background to all I have to say on my subject. But there is one small matter in which my own independent researches led me to a slightly different conclusion. The matter concerns not the Norman feast, but the earlier Anglo-Saxon one.

That our feast is the first known in the West is inevitably a conclusion on which almost every modern student of these matters must now agree. That our feast is connected with the Byzantine feast of the Conception is imposed with almost equal force. But

<sup>1</sup> *A Talking of the Love of God*, ed. from MS. Vernon (Bod. 3938) and collated with MS. Simeon (Brit. Mus. Add. 22283), with introduction, etc., by Sister Dr. M. Salvina Westra, O.P., The Hague, Martinus Nijhof, 1950.

<sup>2</sup> Op cit., pp. 13, 55, 57.



several facts contemporary with the taking over of the new feast in the 1060's suggest to me that, contrary to the usual view supported by Fr. Van Dijk, it did not reach England by way of Italy at all.

The oldest calendar in which the new feast appears in what is undoubtedly the original hand is that of Old Minster (?), Winchester.<sup>1</sup> This calendar is especially interesting as having introduced five new feasts, at least four of them from an Eastern calendar. Many researchers have noticed the simultaneous introduction in this MS. of two new feasts of Our Lady, but have not noticed the others that appeared at the same time. Since only five feasts are selected, it is clear that discrimination was being used. Since all five have considerable devotional interest, it seems that this interest dictated the selection. Someone present in England from the East would be adequate to account for the knowledge in Winchester of the Eastern calendar. That some of these feasts, such as the Conception, find their way into other eleventh-century calendars is indeed readily understandable, especially if the reason for their introduction was devotional.

Fr. Van Dijk has pointed out the calendars and other liturgical MSS. in which the feast of the *Conception* was found. The *other* four feasts were as follows:

(1) St. John Chrysostom, on 27 January. This appears also in another Winchester calendar of about the same date as that in which the Conception occurs and in a Sherborne calendar of the following year. It is not found afterwards for many years; and does not appear in the universal Church of the West until long afterwards. It also appears to be absent from early martyrologies in the West.

(2) St. Joseph, on 19 March. This occurs for the first time about the same date in Sherborne, Evesham and Worcester. It probably did not come from the East, as they celebrated it on an entirely different date, and it had already been mentioned in Western martyrologies. . . . We know from other sources that there was great devotion to St. Joseph in parts of eleventh-century England, as notably in the Midland town of Alcester. This does not appear to have become a feast elsewhere in the West for several centuries.

<sup>1</sup> B. M. Cotton MS. Vitellius, E. xviii. Francis Wormald (*English Benedictine Calendars before A.D. 1100*, published 1933) thinks this may be from Hyde Abbey. The two entries of Our Lady's Presentation and Conception in the earlier Newminster MS., mentioned in Fr. Van Dijk's article, are regarded by Dr. Wormald as later additions during the same century. Cf. his work just cited, pp. 124-5.

(3) St. Catherine, V.M., is found for the first time in our calendar, and not in any other until a century later. There does not seem to be much evidence of its early observance in the West. It was certainly not on the Marble Calendar at Naples.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Fr. Van Dijk mentions the Presentation, which was called in England the *Oblation of Saint Mary in the Temple of the Lord, when she was three years of age*. This feast, together with that of the Conception, was copied by a slightly later contemporary hand into the slightly older Newminster calendar. It is on the same day as the Presentation in the Eastern Church, and is titled in words reminiscent of the Constantinople Synaxary mentioned below. The feast was otherwise to remain unknown in the West for some three centuries until introduced in 1378.

Only the vaguest indications exist for the feast of either the Conception or the Presentation in Italy at that time; and, apart from St. John Chrysostom, who appears twice on the Marble calendar at Naples, none of the other feasts seem to have been known in Italy. Yet in the Constantinople Synaxary of about the ninth century, a kind of Eastern menology, all these feasts occur within a day of the English date, except that of St. Joseph, which the Eastern Church kept on 26 December.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the connexion between England and the East, our Winchester ancestors seem to have acted on their own initiative in taking over this group of new, mainly Eastern feasts.

If this explanation is true, we know at once why the two Marian feasts were connected with the apocryphal stories of St. Anne's miraculous Conceiving of Our Lady and Mary's early life. Since these apocryphal stories had already been published in the West, this explanation is not rigidly necessary: but, in view of other facts, it is the most plausible one.

Was this particular devotion brought from the East with the feast, or was the feast taken because of the devotion? This question is more difficult to answer. One reason is that we have so little evidence of what devotion to the Immaculate Conception, if any, underlay the Greek feast. We only possess before this time, it seems, two Greek sermons in connexion with it. The first is by John of Euboea.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Delehaye, H., 'Hagiographie napolitaine: le calendrier de Marbre'. *Analecta Bollandiana*, 57, 1939, p. 564.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Delehaye, H., *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Brussels, 1902 (*Acta Sanctorum*, Propyl. ad acta SS. Novembris).

We celebrate first [he writes] the ninth day of December, though it is not known universally, the day on which the Blessed Joachim and Anne received the tidings of the generation of the ever-Virgin, Mother of God, Mary. Now bear in mind, beloved ones, that what we have committed to writing is not without sanction or value. For, if the celebration of churches is rightly observed, how much more a thousand times should we celebrate with zeal, piety, and reverence this feast on which the foundations were laid. Not with stones, nor even by the hands of men was the temple of God built; but Christ the Son of God, the corner-stone, Himself, by the good pleasure of the Father and with the co-operation of the all-holy and life-giving Spirit, built it and Himself dwelt in it, that He might fulfil the law and the prophets and so save us.<sup>1</sup>

That sermon dates back to the ninth century.

The passage quoted tells us little, except that Mary was a holy temple of God, the laying of whose foundations was now being celebrated. Other words in his sermon perhaps mean more.

Truly blessed and many times blessed Joachim and Anne, but a thousand times more blessed the offspring and daughter of David who came forth from your thigh and womb. For you are earth, and she is heaven; you are of the earth, through her men become heavenly. Truly you are blessed, for the King of Glory, whom Moses could not see, coveted the beauty of your daughter.<sup>2</sup>

He also calls Mary a completely stainless girl.<sup>3</sup>

Little can be gathered for our purpose from the sermons a century later of George of Nicomedia.<sup>4</sup>

It seems then that we cannot find evidence to suggest that the English learnt the devotion purely from the Eastern Church which celebrated the feasts. It is of course possible that, though we took over the feasts, we had not as yet any marked devotion. Yet the taking over of quite a group of feasts does suggest a discrimination which sprang from devotion. But we shall have to wait another half-century before there is clear evidence of such devotion on English soil. And certainly England is the first country of the West—if not of the universal Church—which has left traces of this.

Certainly the liturgical prayers of this period give no clear evidence of the belief, though they contain some striking phrases, as the reader can see for himself by consulting Fr. Van Dijk's article. This vagueness of the liturgy is not surprising, when we

<sup>1</sup> Migne, P. G., 96, 1499.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., 1479.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., 1478.

<sup>4</sup> Migne, P. G., 100, 1334 ff.

remember that there was hardly a hint of the Assumption in the whole Assumption liturgy commonly used in the West until the year 1950.

It is unfortunate that no Anglo-Saxon has left any sermon or other defence of the feast. We can at any rate say that more glorious words are used on the feast of Our Lady's Conception than on that of St. John the Baptist. From the beginning, Our Lady's Conception begins to oust St. John's. Before long, St. John the Baptist's Conception will entirely disappear from the calendar, while that of Our Lady will steadily grow more firmly established.

Fr. Van Dijk has recalled to us the significance of the event that took place in 1066, some six years after the new feasts were introduced. It seems that the Normans, finding the new feasts in certain calendars, suppressed them as not having Roman sanction. Lanfranc, for instance, did this for Canterbury, and it was not restored for some years. But I refer the reader to Fr. Van Dijk's article. I do not feel able to follow him in his view that the feast disappeared entirely from both practice and memory of the Anglo-Saxons. The enthusiastic defence of the devotion by Eadmer, as well as his belief that the feast had been previously observed, suggest the contrary. Further, when the feast came back, some of the earlier prayers were brought back with it. Fr. Bauman, in an article in a forthcoming volume to be published by the University of Notre Dame, America, points out that "the three prayers of the Mass from the Leofric Missal are found, most of the time with slight variants, in many later mediaeval missals. Especially the Secret and Postcommunion are often repeated."<sup>1</sup> This fact leads Fr. Bauman to a different conclusion from that of Fr. Van Dijk. While the latter thinks, on plausible external evidence, that 'memory of a pre-Conquest or Anglo-Saxon feast of the Conception was utterly lost in the course of hardly two generations', Fr. Bauman is inclined to think that 'either the feast in England never disappeared entirely, or that the first establishing as well as the re-establishing in Southern England has been caused by influence from abroad, viz. from Normandy'.<sup>2</sup> The last supposition is purely arbitrary from the standpoint of external evidence; and is unlikely in view of Lanfranc's both suppressing some Anglo-Saxon feasts and introducing certain Norman ones. For these

<sup>1</sup> See in A. Bauman, 'Notes on the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin and its Liturgy'. To be included in volume of studies entitled *The Immaculate Conception*, probably 1954, The University of Notre Dame, Ind., U.S.A.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

reasons, I would suggest to Fr. Van Dijk the probability that, in spite of certain external evidence that the feast was forgotten, memory and even the liturgy of the feast must have been preserved among some Anglo-Saxons without interruption. Otherwise how do we account for the existence right up to this day of some of the Leofric Missal's prayers?

We are brought to the conclusion that a real devotion to the Immaculate Conception existed before the Conquest, and remained alive among the common people, to attain verbal expression in the celebrated treatise of Eadmer during the early part of the twelfth century.

It is true, as Fr. Van Dijk with most scholars supposes, that in defending the local English feast, Eadmer was going beyond St. Anselm. But was he opposing him? And was he in opposition to St. Anselm in supporting the devotion? Fr. Spedalieri<sup>1</sup> has in recent years argued with great force that the circumstances and arguments of Eadmer's treatise make it almost certain that he was supporting, not attacking, his master, and that Eadmer, therefore, regarded St. Anselm as at least sympathetic to both feast and doctrine. Eadmer speaks of opposition in high quarters, from people who have knowledge without charity, people puffed up with their own importance. Could he have thus written, unless he knew that no one would suspect his beloved master as being included? The chief objection to the view is the known fact that St. Anselm did not reintroduce the feast into the Canterbury Calendar. But may he not at least have been sympathetic? This view is strengthened by the fact that St. Anselm's nephew, Anselm of Edmundsbury, was one of the strongest supporters of both feast and devotion.

Whatever may be true of St. Anselm, his secretary, Eadmer, shows the first definite signs of an existing devotion. Later in this article, I shall refer to his arguments. For the moment, I wish merely to establish the fact that he reflects undeniable popular devotion.

This is how Eadmer brings his arguments to an end:

Could I believe, I implore, that thou couldst be weighed down in thy conception with the death of sin that took hold of the world through the devil's envy? thou whom the divine power foreordained and raised up to so great an eminence! thou whom the divine Wisdom that disposes all things endowed with so many prerogatives!

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. F. Spedalieri, 'Anselmus per Eadmerum', *Antonianum*, 1943, p. 205 ff.

thou whom God's ineffable mercy for all who are to be saved chose to be His mother to come to the help of the world! As I consider again and again the reasons I have given above, my mind refuses to believe it, my will turns away from it, my tongue does not dare to confess it. . . .

Those who think otherwise must believe what seems to them better. But I, most holy Lady, I, thy little unimportant slave, I know, I believe and I confess that thou camest forth from the root of Jesse all-beautiful, free from any wound of sin that might discolour thee; and, remaining all-pure thou didst bring forth a flower all-beautiful. I say, thou didst bring forth not any sort of flower, but one upon whom the sevenfold Spirit rested, one who poured over, and filled, every creature with the odour of eternal life, the odour of eternal salvation and the grace of the Godhead.<sup>1</sup>

He says elsewhere she must have been 'most free of all sin': that any sin in her conception must have been of the parents and not of Mary: that she could not at any moment have been deprived of grace and the Holy Spirit.

The next signs of devotion, apart from the evidence of reintroduction and support of the feast, such as are given by Fr. Van Dijk, are found in its spirited defence in the writings of Osbert of Clare. He tells how, in 1127, in spite of two bishops' opposition, they 'persisted in the services of the day . . . and completed the glorious festival with triumphant delight'.<sup>2</sup>

Fr. Van Dijk has given to us some of the evidence for the interest of St. Alban's in the feast. It is well known that not long after this a certain Nicholas of St. Alban's had a correspondence on this subject with Peter of Celles. In that correspondence the two writers clearly refer to an earlier treatise by Nicholas. Many people think that we have this work under Nicholas's name in the Bodleian, a work which had remained unpublished until this year, when Dr. Talbot has made it public in the pages of the *Revue Bénédictine*.<sup>3</sup> He was provoked to write by the fact that rumours had reached England of the opposition to the feast on the part of St. Bernard. Clearly so great an authority must be answered; and Nicholas sets out to do so. We shall find Nicholas among the most valuable of these early witnesses, when we desire to establish how far those early Englishmen understood the meaning of what they defended.

<sup>1</sup> Migne, P. L., 159, 309.

<sup>2</sup> Thurston, H. and Slater, Th., *Eadmeri Mon. Cant. Tractatus de Conceptione Sancte Mariae*, Herder, 1904, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Revue bénédictine*, lxxix, 1954, 83-117. The article includes the whole Bodleian MS. Bodl. Auct. D.4. 18, published for the first time.



We perhaps have some clue to the English early interest in the Presentation and the Conception, as well as in Our Lady's Spouse, St. Joseph, at a time so long before any of these feasts were generally known in the West, if we pause a moment to remind ourselves how very active Anglo-Saxon Marian devotion was.<sup>1</sup> Some 2000 churches were dedicated to Our Lady under various titles during this period. In Oxford, in the thirteenth century, there was mass of Our Lady daily in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. In six other city churches of Oxford, chantries were endowed in which there were perpetual masses of Our Lady. There was evidently no question here of private masses accumulating for no other purpose than to get people released from purgatory. In the Church of St. Ebbe, there was a fraternity of St. Mary, with the curious purpose of honouring 'God, St. Mary and the festival of the Assumption'. This society maintained a priest to say mass and canonical hours at the altar of St. Mary on all feasts and Sundays. The feasts of the Assumption and the Conception were both days on which no lectures were given in Oxford University. The first, at least, of these feasts is still in the official Oxford calendar, and the second survived the Reformation in the English Book of Common Prayer. So predominant was the interest in the Assumption that, up till now, those who have studied the subject have only discovered one mediaeval church—in Dorset—being dedicated to the Conception. Forty-five, on the other hand, of which there were seventeen in the Oxford district, were dedicated to the Assumption. Other interesting indications of English originality with regard to Our Lady were the following dedications: Our Lady, Our Lady of Pity, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Mary of Charity, St. Mary-in-the-Castle, St. Mary de Grace, The Mother of God, The Blessed Mother of God, The Blessed Virgin and Child, Christ and St. Mary, the Salutation of the Mother of God, The Ascension of Our Lord and the Assumption of Our Lady, The Purification, the Nativity of Our Lady. It is well known that many inns also had a Marian title, e.g. the Salutation Inn, and the Angel. And the Annunciation is still Lady Day.

In Oxford and Cambridge, following the example of Paris, an oath to defend the Immaculate Conception was during part of the fourteenth century administered to those taking degrees.

<sup>1</sup> The information in this paragraph is taken from the Oxford annals, published in the Rolls series, Miss F. Arnold Foster's *Studies in Church Dedication*, a recent work by the late Bishop Kirk of Oxford on Church dedications in his diocese, and common works of reference.

What arguments did these early devotional writers use to defend the new devotion, that England was so anxious to promote?

At the present day, the words of Genesis iii, 15 about the enmity between the devil and the woman, and his seed and her seed, are used considerably by theologians, with the support of several other Bible passages, as a Scripture proof for the Immaculate Conception. I have only come across one of these early writers, Osbert of Clare, using this text. He writes in his Sermon on the Conception:

For this reason the devil suspended his scourge, because the Lord wished to bring sin to an end through this girl that would be born. . . . For this is that woman of whom the Lord said that he would put enmities between the serpent and the woman. Therefore in this way the blessed mother of God and ever-virgin Mary overcame the initial suggestion of the devil, and in a manly way cut off the head of the dragon with the sword of her virtue. Nor can there be found any other woman than this in the whole series of human generation, concerning whom God in the beginning of his offspring-world would make so glorious a prophecy.

St. Aelred has an unexpected argument from the words *Benedicta in mulieribus*. Like her prototype, the Sister of Moses, St. Aelred tells us, she

precedes in dignity, in holiness, in purity, in mortification of the flesh. . . . But also because (like her prototype) she passed over first; for she was the first of all the human race who escaped the curse of our first parents. She deserved to hear from the angel: *Benedicta in mulieribus*, that is, while all women are under the curse, thou alone among them art counted worthy of this blessing.<sup>1</sup>

The argument most often associated with Eadmer was one from fittingness. He applied to this case the principles of his master, St. Anselm. So much so, that, as noted above, Fr. Spedalieri has argued from Eadmer that, after all, St. Anselm must have held the doctrine himself. Had he not propounded the principle: *Decuit ut ea puritate Virgo niteret qua major sub Deo nequit intelligi?* It was fitting that the Virgin should be resplendent with a purity so great that the mind could not conceive a greater.

St. Anselm had been clearer about the principle than about its application; so that many theologians have been able to argue with much plausibility from other words of the saint that he did

<sup>1</sup> Aelred, *Sermo xvii in Ass. B. Mariae*, Migne, P. L., 115, 305.



not hold the Immaculate Conception. With Eadmer it was the reverse. He is perhaps typically English in that he is more concerned with the practical consequences of the principle than with its abstract enunciation. Speaking of Christ, he writes: 'Could he not do the same for the human temple that he prepared for himself as a bodily dwelling-place, so that, although it were conceived among the thorns of sin, it should itself be free from all puncture of thorns? Assuredly he could. If then He wished it, He also did it.' *Potuit plane, et voluit; si ergo voluit, et fecit.* That was the original Eadmerian form of the later Marian principle: POTUIT, DECUIT; ergo FECIT.

A more scriptural argument, which was used more than any other by English writers over two centuries before the time of Duns Scotus, was one that might be expressed thus: 'Whatever privileges God has accorded to other saints, he had accorded in a much high degree in Mary, because of her superior dignity.'

This principle, at least implicitly, had led to the establishment of the feast in the East, and again, perhaps to some extent independently, in the West. The first use of the principle was a naive one that we should not approve. For it had led to the apparent invention of the legend of the miraculous conceiving of Our Lady by St. Anne, as announced by an angel, on the analogy of the gospel story of St. John the Baptist. The second application we must all approve, since it was confined to the liturgy. If it is lawful and praiseworthy to celebrate the Birthday and Conception of St. John the Baptist, *a fortiori*, they reasoned, it is lawful and praiseworthy to celebrate the Birthday and Conception of Our Lady, who was so much greater and called to so much higher a vocation than St. John.

Eadmer is the first person about whom we know that he applied the principle to the sanctity of Our Lady's conception. If, he writes, Jeremias—as tradition tells us—was sanctified before birth: and if St. John the Baptist is recorded in the scriptures to have had the grace and understanding, while still in the womb, to recognize Christ, must we not say that Our Lady had a sanctification still more privileged? If St. John the Baptist was sanctified in the womb, will not Mary have been sanctified from the first moment of conception?

Within a few years of Eadmer, we find Osbert of Clare using the same argument. If, he writes, St. John the Baptist was sanctified in the womb, how much more would she from whose flesh

the holy of holies was made flesh and came into the world as a bridegroom from his bridal chamber—how much more would she be sanctified in *ipsa conceptione*? He then applies the argument to the liturgy. If the feast of the servant is kept, how could we refuse to keep the feast of the mother? Again he writes:

If John the Baptist was purified and taught by the Spirit so that he leapt in his mother's womb, we cannot doubt that the house of the divine wisdom constructed within the mother's womb, would be completely filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, would be consumed with burning zeal, having the white garment of virtues, and washed clean and purified from every stain even in her body.

And again he argues:

What wonder if in her very conception Almighty God sanctified the glorious matter of her virginal body, when Jeremias and others were sanctified in the womb.<sup>1</sup>

A few years later, Nicholas of St. Alban's shows himself aware of the argument, but is more subtle in his use of it. He is arguing against St. Bernard's objections to the feast. One of these arguments, as Nicholas had understood it, had been that, while Mary must come under the common disease of a corrupt generation, as is true of all mankind except Christ, yet undoubtedly St. Bernard admitted that she was born without sin, as were Jeremias and St. John the Baptist and even David, because of the words: 'In te confirmatus sum in utero; de ventre matris meae tu es protector meus'.<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, Nicholas at first refuses completely to accept St. Bernard's concession. He insists at great length that we have no reason to state that Jeremias, David and St. John the Baptist were born without sin. In the case of Jeremias, he quotes the authority of St. Jerome; in the case of David, that of St. Augustine. He quotes many of the most important Augustinian passages for original sin to prove that everyone is involved at birth, and that none of these three could have been exempted. But he is uncomfortable with regard to St. John the Baptist, on account of the Scripture words concerning his rejoicing in the womb at the presence of Christ. Nicholas, loath even to grant this much for any other than Mary, suggests that perhaps St. John the Baptist received the Spirit partially, but without remission of the common sin of mankind. However, in the end, under the influence of St.

<sup>1</sup> Thurston-Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxx, 6.

Gregory the Great's authority, he allows that perhaps we may admit that St. John the Baptist was sanctified in the womb. He proposes a new argument from Scripture. 'No one goes up to heaven, except he who comes down from heaven.' He proposes that there are two who join Christ to the rest of the mystical body, and may therefore be said to be so intimately Christ's members as to have come down from heaven. To these two, St. John the Baptist and Our Lady, he here applies the term, used by St. Bernard of Our Lady, the 'neck' of Christ's body. He continues to vacillate as to whether even the privilege of sanctity before birth could apply to St. John the Baptist, ending by leaving the question open.<sup>1</sup> So, instead of arguing, as others had done, to Mary's Immaculate Conception from the analogy of the Baptist, he argues to her Immaculate Birth from contrast with others. His arguments for the Immaculate Conception, as will be seen, are of another order.

From this period for many years, this particular argument ceases to be used.

A third theological argument, also related to the Scriptures, was one which had been common in the early oriental writings. When Wisdom prepares for itself a house, Eadmer tells us, it makes it a worthy one.

The palace, wherein the Eternal Wisdom of God decreed that the Son should dwell in joy and peace, could not fittingly be built on weak foundations. But the foundations would be weak if the conception of Mary were in any way corrupted by stain of sin.<sup>2</sup>

Osbert of Clare argues in like manner from the fact that Mary was the tabernacle of the word.

Nicholas writes:

Wisdom has built for itself a home; not only doubtless the home of the Virgin's mind where he would dwell invisibly; but the home of her womb, in which the fullness of the divinity dwelt bodily. . . . For if she had contracted sin from her parents, the old nature of Adam would have laid the foundations, not the new nature of Christ. He who was born in her, laid the foundations. . . . The tree in which he was born was like the fruit which was born from it. Just as the words of Our Lord saying that *none greater was born of woman than John the Baptist* did not apply to the Saviour or to His Mother, so

<sup>1</sup> This is a summary of the passage in C. H. Talbot, Nicholas of St. Alban's and Saint Bernard, *Revue bénédictine*, lxi, 1954, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Eadmer, in Migne, P. L., 159, pp. 306-7.

also the words of David, *In sin did my mother conceive me*, did not place the Saviour or His Mother under the general corruption. . . . The builder said to the building: 'Thou art all beautiful,' as though he were to say: 'In the foundation of (thy) conception, in the building of thy Birth, as it were, the Wall, in the hallowing of thy conversation, as it were, the Root, thou art all beautiful. Thou art all beautiful, because in thee is nothing disgraceful; for thou wert built by Wisdom. Thou art all beautiful, because everything that is beautiful is in thee, since thou art full of grace, and there is no stain in thee, neither original handed down to thee, nor stain brought on by the will, because thou art founded by Him, than whom there is no other foundation. Thou art all beautiful by nature, thou art all beautiful by grace.<sup>1</sup>

This argument, like the last one, seems to be forgotten in the immediately succeeding generations, and is probably not regarded as sufficiently scholastic by William of Ware and Richard of Bromwich.

Eadmer also argued from Mary's predestination.

Until God shows me something more worthy of my Lady's excellence, I will say what I say: I will not change what I have written. . . . For nothing, Lady, is equal to thee, nothing comparable. All that is is either above thee or below thee. Above thee is God alone.<sup>2</sup>

If this is so, as all must allow, how could her beginnings have been in a state of sin below the angels, of whom she is to be the Queen?

Did these twelfth-century theologians realize all the theological problems involved? Were they sufficiently aware of the Catholic doctrine of the universality of original sin and the need of redemption? Were they perhaps only by ignorance able to step in where the great Scholastic theologians of their age feared to tread?

True enough, they were not formal theologians. They were ordinary Englishmen with a deep devotion to the Virgin Mother. They had, however, some understanding of the inherent difficulties of their contention. They knew that by no means everyone would accept their arguments. For this reason, both Eadmer and Nicholas are anxious to make it clear that, if what they are saying cannot be reconciled with the Catholic faith, they will go no further.<sup>3</sup> But, until the Church speaks, they cannot think otherwise than that Mary was immaculately conceived.

<sup>1</sup> *Revue bénédictine*, loc. cit., 112.

<sup>2</sup> Thurston-Slater, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Thurston-Slater, p. 16; *Revue bénédictine*, l.c., 111, 2-4; 114, 24-5.

As all their contemporaries, they were Augustinians, and confessed that all mankind were involved in Adam's sin. They also, like St. Augustine, connected this sin with physical generation. Some of the writers of their time seemed to regard original sin as primarily inherent in the flesh; others, following the new theology of St. Anselm, insisted that there could be no sin until the creation of the new soul. However much of either or both these views our Anglo-Saxon writers accepted, they agreed that Mary was free from any real sin.

Eadmer is content to say that, if there was sin in Mary's conception, it would have been in the parents, not in Mary. Further, he argues from the example of the chestnut that, if God could preserve the smoothness of the nut in the midst of the thorns, he could keep Mary's body pure though coming from a sinful race. These arguments at least show that, in so far as there could be any sin inherent in the flesh, God could prevent such sin contaminating that of Mary. Still, as the law of our condition, he admitted that 'all men had sinned in Adam', and that it was 'wrong to deny this'.<sup>1</sup> He recognized that, by that sin, all the good for which man was created was destroyed.<sup>2</sup> He recognized that none could be freed from this sin before Christ, that God alone could remove it.<sup>3</sup> He knew that he was postulating an exception in the case of Our Lady that demanded a singular and incomprehensible divine power, that he was postulating that she was pure from sin in a way that was true of none other mere child of Adam. In short, he was supposing for Mary a quite singular grace.

Osbert was satisfied to show that God is capable of preserving Mary's flesh. He contends that, if God could take the pure Eve from the rib of Adam, he could take the pure Virgin from the mass of prevarication of Adam's children without any contagion of sin.<sup>4</sup>

Nicholas takes this objection so seriously as to devote a large part of his treatise to it. Some of his opponents argued that there could be no sinless conception from the sin they thought inevitable in the use of marriage, and concluded that, for this reason, the Holy Ghost could have no part in any normal conception. Nicholas denies the supposition strenuously. God would not have commanded men to increase and multiply, if this was impossible without sin.

<sup>1</sup> Thurston-Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

Besides, went on Nicholas, even if you contend that it is revealed that all men incur original sin, could not God in his grace make an exception? However, he continues, suppose I admit that Mary's parents did actually sin in generating their child—a fact we have no right to assume—this still does not necessarily affect the child. We honour the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, even though Nero sinned in putting them to death.

Nor is it reasonable, he went on, to say that there was sin in Mary's flesh before the advent of her soul. Sin can only be in the soul, and Mary's soul came straight from God. He confirms his argument by quoting from St. Augustine that there can be no mention of sin when we speak of Mary.

Finally he points out that, even if one admits that Mary's flesh came from her parents in a corrupt state, it could have been straightway cleansed at the moment of the infusion of her soul.

If the conception of the Blessed Virgin was in all respects like unto ours [he means, up to the creation of her soul exclusively], she received in that conception only the cause of sin, not the sin itself. For the flesh alone comes from propagation; nor is it conscious as long as it remains without a soul. She was not therefore conceived in sin, since her conception knew neither guilt nor the act of sin, but only that cause of sin. And the law proves that the cause of sin is not itself sin.<sup>1</sup>

But there was another problem. Since we are all one with Adam, we need, since the Fall, redemption by Christ. The force of this difficulty was not perhaps fully realized by Eadmer, Osbert and Nicholas. But, though they did not use the term 'preservative redemption', applied later by Duns Scotus, they saw that Mary's preservation was due to Christ. Osbert, for instance, says that those who object to the feast should 'learn that they are keeping the feast not of the act of sin, but they are showing solemnly their manifold joys concerning the first fruits of our redemption'.<sup>2</sup> Eadmer always insists that the purity he postulates in Mary is because of her Son. The redemption itself demands sinlessness in the Redeemer's mother. His statement that none will be purified except through Mary's Son, implies that he understands this of Mary herself. Nicholas thinks it enough to point out that Mary was the foundation of Christ, laid not by the old nature of Adam, but by the new nature of Christ. He adds that 'the tree in which

<sup>1</sup> *Rev. Bén.*, l.c., 115, lines 22-6.

<sup>2</sup> Thurston-Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 63.



he was born was like the fruit born from it'.<sup>1</sup> Later he writes that 'the reason for this conception is that which transcends reason, the sacrament of our redemption'.<sup>2</sup>

The question has been asked, how is it that these English devotees of Mary in the twelfth century really accepted the Immaculate Conception as we do today, and, if their arguments were so sound, how is it that St. Bernard and St. Thomas and other great theologians seemed to be so unaware of what they had said? Why did it all have to be proved again at the time of Duns Scotus? One reason is of course that they did not write formal treatises of theology. Their works were not part of the traditional theological material that was known. It is, in fact, quite certain that Eadmer's treatise was not known to St. Bernard, since not the slightest trace of a reference to it can be found anywhere in his works. Not only this, but no one quotes from it among the great theologians until the fourteenth century, with the exception of St. Bonaventure. And even St. Bonaventure is not sure who wrote it. It was not even thought to be a work of St. Anselm before the fourteenth century. Nicholas shows several verbal reflections of Eadmer. But Nicholas's treatise, published for the first time this year, seems to have remained entirely unknown through the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup>

Did our early English devotees of Mary remain then without any effect on the world at large? They certainly made their important contribution to the devotion of Englishmen to St. Mary, and who knows how far that devotion travelled?

At any rate, even if their labours were unknown outside England, they were not unknown in heaven. There was a steady and growing devotion to the Immaculate Conception from Eadmer to Duns Scotus and beyond. It was known in the parishes, it was made a holiday in the universities, it was celebrated in the cathedrals, and all manner of pious books were written in its defence. Who knows but that this steady devotion and witness to the truth on the part of men of humble standing was the divine preparation for the atmosphere in which Duns Scotus was born? He probably never fully knew what instinct drove him to carry

<sup>1</sup> *Rev. Bén.*, l.c., 112, lines 13 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 116, lines 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> I have written elsewhere on the early English theology of the Conception: 'The Defence of the Immaculate Conception a National Heritage', *Clergy Review*, 1941, XXI, p. 311; 'Our Lady's Conception: a mediaeval manuscript', *ib.*, 1948, XXX, p. 85. Cf. also a more technical article, about to appear in the Acta of the 1954 Roman Marian Congress, 'Theologia Immaculatae Conceptionis apud primos defensores, sc. in Anglia, saec. XII.'

the defence of Mary's privilege into the universities and over the seas. It cannot be a sheer coincidence that Scotus was born and studied in the island which had so distinguished itself in its popular fervour. In no devotion has the action of the Holy Spirit, working through the common love of the faithful, so obviously brought the truth to the minds of theologians through His influence on the ordinary faithful. And, if this is so, then the Holy Spirit must have been very active for the honour of Mary's name in mediaeval England.

It is perhaps a lawful cause of joy, then, that this is one of many instances where England, under the Holy Spirit, brought a deeper understanding of the faith to Rome and not, as has sometimes been said, a case of Rome imposing herself upon England.



# DANTE AND HIS 'ILLUSTRATORS'

By ANTHONY BERTRAM

THE recent appearance of Mr. Roe's handsome book on Blake's 'illustrations' to *The Divine Comedy*<sup>1</sup> is the occasion to raise an aesthetic and art-historical problem of major importance. The immense and varied reaction of visual artists to Dante poses a general question on the nature of the interplay between the visual arts and poetry. It is a problem that needs reconsidering.

I am not, at the moment, using the word 'poetry' in the wide sense which M. Maritain has recently so well expounded: 'that intercommunication between the inner being of things and the inner being of the human Self which is a kind of divination . . . the secret life of each and all of the arts; another name for what Plato called *mousiké*'.<sup>2</sup> This sense, which is that of Coleridge's 'poesy', may become inevitable if one solution of the problem is accepted; but I begin by using 'poetry' to mean a quality of literature, although not necessarily confined to verse.

In his introduction to the English edition of Volkmann's *Iconografia Dantesca*,<sup>3</sup> Charles Sarolea asked: 'What are the respective limitations and provinces of literature and art in general, of poetry and the arts of design in particular? How far, and under what conditions, is it possible for the painter to compete with the poet in the same subjects? And whenever rivalry is possible, who is to gain the victory?'

That poses the problem in precisely the way that I suggest should be reconsidered. It was written at the height of the aesthetic movement and remained valid for most aestheticians until recently. But there is a profound error in the attitude

<sup>1</sup> *Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy*, by Albert S. Roe. Princeton University Press, 1953 (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege).

<sup>2</sup> *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, by Jacques Maritain. The Harvill Press, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> *Iconografia Dantesca: The Pictorial Representations to Dante's Divine Comedy*, by Ludwig Volkmann. English ed., revised and augmented by the author. Grevel, London, 1899, limited to 250 copies.

suggested by such words as 'compete', 'rivalry' and 'victory'. I believe that there exists, at the greatest depth, a complementary relationship which is analogous to that between the parts which go to make the whole in any work of art. The poem and its 'illustration' combine to produce a new *integritas*, which, therefore, does not exist in either material work of art, but only as a kind of Platonic Idea.

It is a commonplace that the whole in a work of art is greater than the sum of its parts, and so, in our particular example, what we might call the Idea of Dante breeds something new and in some degree different when mated to the Idea of Botticelli, Michelangelo or Blake. But this new entity, of course, does not destroy the specific qualities of either partner, which, in some debatable way, are related to the material work of each.<sup>1</sup> But it is very important at this point to draw a distinction, which I have suggested by the use of inverted commas for the word 'illustrators', between those who have merely illustrated Dante and those who have created this new entity. This distinction does not so much reside in the degree to which they 'follow' his text as in their success in their own art—the degree to which they create a *visual* correlative to the Idea of Dante, or rather, in most cases, of a chosen element in the Idea of Dante. We are here confronted with a difficulty of language. The word 'illustrate' implies a one-way illumination: the illustrator illumines the thing illustrated. We want a word that implies a two-way illumination which generates this third entity. I cannot find one that is tolerable. We might call this new entity an 'amalgam' but we can hardly call Michelangelo 'Dante's amalgamator'. I hope it will not be too confusing if I use three combinations which can now be defined. The literal illustrator is one whose design lacks independent existence as visual art. He is therefore a mere craftsman and outside Dante's field of activity. There is no point at which they can come together and generate the new entity. The artist illustrator is one whose work *has* independent value as visual art, but who is not of the same kind as Dante. The most fertile mare is no use in a field with a bull. Therefore, for example, Ingres's or Corot's illustrations to Dante, or Raphael's idealized portrait of him, do not generate. Finally the creative illustrator is one who does generate precisely because

<sup>1</sup> The extreme opposite views on this are well exposed in *Beauty and other Forms of Value*, by Samuel Alexander, Macmillan, 1933, *cap.* IV and *passim*; and in *The Principles of Art*, by R. G. Collingwood O.U.P., 1938, *cap.* VII.

his work has an independent existence as visual art and is of Dante's kind. I do not, of course, mean by this that the generic relationship is at all points. If it were so, there would be identity and therefore barrenness. In future I shall retain the word 'illustrator' in inverted commas simply as a loose general word to cover all three types.

One of our first tasks, then, if we were to tackle our problem, would be to sort the 'illustrators' into these three categories—a work of enormous critical difficulty. But the very first task, of course, would be to collect our material, a mere matter of art-history. A certain amount of work has already been done in assembling these facts but, so far as I can discover, they are not assembled in any one comprehensive book;<sup>1</sup> although in the case of certain individuals, notably Botticelli, Michelangelo and Blake, there has been full documentation and iconographical analysis. The nearest to anything comprehensive that I know is Volkmann's book, but it is fifty years out of date. It does, however, suggest the wealth of material, for it deals with 115 illuminated codices and the work of 190 additional painters and sculptors and of fifty-eight engravers. But we see how far that is from being complete when we find that Toynbee's list of English 'illustrators' alone gives 124 painters and sculptors and twenty-six engravers.<sup>2</sup> A full inquiry would, then, certainly yield remarkable figures, which in themselves would have some significance. Why, we should ask, has Dante given rise to this uniquely widespread visual reaction? And we should have to go on to draw a statistical comparison with, say, Homer, Virgil and Shakespeare. I suspect that we should find the figures very much lower. But when we took the next step of inquiring into the quality of Dante 'illustration' compared to theirs, we should certainly find the discrepancy enormous.

But I must confine myself here to Dante. The inquiry offers no difficulty with most of the 'illustrators' who come under our notice, whose names we are perhaps hearing for the first time. Many of them probably never read Dante or only dipped where

<sup>1</sup> The published catalogue of the Fiske Dante collection at Cornell University—over 8000 items—contains only a hundred or so directly bearing on the subject; many of these are mere articles or pamphlets and most treat of limited aspects such as the work of one nation or one artist. Paul Schubring's *Illustrationen zu Dantes Göttlicher Komödie* (Amalthea-Verlag, 1931) has appeared since the catalogue, but it is mainly a 'picture book' and confined to Italian work up to the sixteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> *Britain's Tribute to Dante in Literature and Art: A Chronological Record of 540 years (c. 1380-1920)*, by Paget Toynbee, O.U.P. (for the British Academy), 1921.

fashion suggested or even used some source like the periodical which published a series of passages from the *Inferno* 'suitable for illustration'.<sup>1</sup> They were often following a predecessor, rather than Dante. For example, in 1778 Fuseli exhibited a *Paolo and Francesca* at the Academy. Toynbee's list gives more than fifty English painters who subsequently treated the subject. In 1773 Reynolds exhibited an *Ugolino*—the earliest known easel picture on a Dante subject—which was engraved in the following year and again later. There followed a spate of *Ugolinos*. These two subjects, the one lending itself to sentimental, the other to sensational, mistreatment, were as popular abroad as in England. I am not suggesting that everyone mistreated them but only that this proliferation was not the result of any particular affinity with Dante in the painters. All this would remain on the margin of our subject; but at its centre is a group of important artists, each in some way Dantesque and all in some way associated. It may be useful, at the risk of oversimplification, to suggest this association in a sort of genealogical table. Giotto is, of course, at its head. The later Sienese illustrators were all in some degree influenced by him and the main Florentine descent is direct through Orcagna, Fra Angelico and Botticelli to Michelangelo. Beside this is the Umbrian Signorelli, who worked with Angelico at Orvieto and is linked to Botticelli through the Pollaiuoli, who influenced them both, and to Michelangelo, whom he influenced. Delacroix, Rodin and Blake are variously associated with Michelangelo. Fuseli, who made six water-colour drawings for the *Inferno* and *Paradiso* and three oils of the *Paolo and Francesco* and *Ugolino* subjects, became a close and life long friend of Blake's in 1780, which is about the time when Blake's friendship began with Flaxman, whose 110 Dante illustrations were to become so immensely popular in Piroli's engravings.

Rossetti, as everybody knows, was a fanatical admirer of Blake and Botticelli, and largely 'discovered' them for his generation.<sup>2</sup> He and the whole Pre-Raphaelite movement felt the impact of the German Nazarenes, particularly of Cornelius and Overbeck, who were in the circle of King John of Saxony, the translator of *The Divine Comedy*.

<sup>1</sup> *Bozzetti danteschi ad uso degli artisti*. In *La Festa di Dante*, Nos. 29, 30, 36, 1864-65. This was a publication issued by the *Giornale del Centenario* from Florence in fifty-nine numbers.

<sup>2</sup> See my Selwyn Brinton lecture to the Royal Society of Arts on *The English Discovery of Botticelli*, *Journal*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 4819 (21 April 1950).

It is easy to attach several minor 'illustrators' to this group—Clovio, for example, to Michelangelo or Simeon Solomon to the Pre-Raphaelites—but it is more interesting to speculate on the possibility of attaching a painter like Paul Nash. His first admirations were for Rossetti and Blake: he wrote an unpublished poem on Dante and when teaching at the Royal College he urged his students to read him. Although he never himself read *The Divine Comedy*, I believe, and the *Vita Nuova* only in Rossetti's translation, and although he certainly never 'illustrated' Dante, his case offers the fascinating possibility of an important body of artists 'in communion' with Dante through affinity with his creative 'illustrators'.

However that may be, I feel that those associations I have outlined between the artists of the central group correspond to some basic affinity, although I do not pretend to define it. It seems to be marked by a linear emphasis and a relative subordination of colour, by a Michelangelesque *terribilità* and by a visionary mysticism. All these qualities are not common to all of them, but they overlap and so link them and suggest some deeper underlying and fully common quality. I am inclined to relate this somehow to a 'poetry' which bridges from M. Maritain's sense to mine and which will often lead them to writing poetry as a means of parallel expression. Michelangelo, Blake and Rossetti were, of course, considerable poets. We have no evidence that Botticelli wrote in any form, unless we accept Vasari's reference to a commentary on Dante by him; but we do know that he frequently took his themes from poetry. I do not know whether Delacroix ever wrote poetry, but his *Journal* clearly demonstrates his literary power and his constant preoccupation with literature.

If, then, it could be established that there is actual 'dual expression' or at least an abortive desire for it in all or most of these pictorial artists, we should be dealing with something quite different from the laboured 'story-telling' of a Hogarth, which hampers rather than supplements his art. We should have a 'literary' element in visual art which is not extraneous, nor to be treated with the contempt and pity which recent aesthetic theory has extended to it.

My space here only allows me to make very brief comments on a few of the 'illustrators' I have mentioned. I do not know the Dante codices which are scattered over Europe and America. It appears from Volkmann's account that the majority of them are

by literal or artist 'illustrators' who in either case rarely explored the text below its literal meaning. I must therefore leave these codices out of any further consideration except to draw attention to another comparatively recent book in which Mr. Pope-Hennessy has described one of the finest with learning and insight.<sup>1</sup> He attributes the miniatures for the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* to Lorenzo Vecchietta and accepts the earlier attribution of those for the *Paradiso* to Giovanni di Paolo. Earlier writers, unfamiliar with this codex, had already found traces of Dante in Giovanni's *Last Judgment* in the Siena Academy;<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Pope-Hennessy establishes that Dante's influence had spread to Siena at a considerably earlier date.

But we must be cautious about *Last Judgments*. The art-historians and critics seem at one time to have convinced themselves that Dante invented Hell, Heaven and Purgatory. There was, of course, a large mediaeval body of images, particularly for Hell, which were common property and from which Dante himself borrowed. Purely Dantesque images were soon attached to these and their appearance in any particular *Last Judgment* does not prove that the artist was in direct touch with Dante. The *Hell* of the Capella Strozzi frescoes in Sta. Maria Novella, which is little more than a blown-up miniature,<sup>3</sup> has unmistakable Dante imagery; but the very fact that 'Orcagna'<sup>4</sup> was quite happy to introduce Charon, Minos, Cerberus and so on into a Christian church shows how far they had already become accepted conventions. It is also doubtful to what extent we can consider Fra Angelico as a member of our group. Clearly the sympathy between him and Dante was not deep, in spite of iconographical borrowings.

Giotto, on the other hand, contrary to popular belief, poses the opposite problem. The Bargello portrait does not *prove* that they ever met,<sup>5</sup> nor can we confidently accept the testimony of Benvenuto da Imola that Dante inspired the Paduan frescoes. Nothing solid can be built on the *Last Judgments* and the famous

<sup>1</sup> *A Sienese Codex of the Divine Comedy*. Ed. by John Pope-Hennessy. Phaidon Press, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Giovanni di Paolo*, by John Pope-Hennessy. Chatto & Windus, 1937, pp. 135 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Volkmann illustrates (pl. 11) a close parallel from Codex Ital. 74 of the Bib. Nat., Paris.

<sup>4</sup> I use the generic name to avoid controversy for which this is not the place.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of this problem, see *Portraits of Dante*, etc., by R. T. Holbrook. Warner, 1949, *cap.* XI and XII.



reference to Giotto in the *Purgatorio* merely records a public fact. But none the less, we feel their affinity to be close and fruitful. We find it in common methods of narrative, in a particular economy of dramatic expression and gesture, in a particular plastic weight and spiritual intensity, in a Franciscan fusion of the humanly anecdotal with the visionary and ascetic. This interplay between two great and creative impulses is far more illuminating than mere iconographical links; and it is chiefly this which we also remark in Signorelli, Michelangelo, Delacroix and Rodin, though in each of these cases we do find clearer iconographical links than in Giotto's. Signorelli, for example, put Dante's portrait in his Orvieto frescoes and accompanied it with medallions creatively illustrating the first eleven Cantos of the *Purgatorio* and keeping close to the text. On the other hand, in the *Hell* he interpreted freely, combining elements from Cantos III, V and XXV. Although we can trace no direct borrowings in the *Damned*, yet it is in this famous fresco that we most deeply feel the germinating impulse from Dante, or rather from the Dante of the *Inferno*. The *Paradiso* is outside Signorelli's range.

The case of Michelangelo is very similar. We know how constantly and closely he studied the poet and how deep was his devotion. The two Dante sonnets are his direct witness, and the last line of CLIV<sup>1</sup> is absolute:

*Simil uom nè maggior non nacque mai.*

But what comes of this in his work is not to be measured by the appearance of Charon and Minos in the *Last Judgment* or the statues of Leah and Rachel which flank the Moses.<sup>2</sup> It is something much more profound and complicated, an idea which transcends the material of any individual work of art and is born of Michelangelo's relation, as supreme visual artist, with his own poetry and with Dante's.

So it may be maintained that Rodin and Delacroix, according to their powers, were more deeply Dantesque than the works directly based on him would suggest, although it is true that Rodin's *Gates of Hell* occupied a large part of his life and that he developed many elements from it in isolated statues such as the *Ugolino*, *The Thinker* and *The Kiss* (Paolo and Francesca). Delacroix, so far as I know, only borrowed twice, with a considerable

<sup>1</sup> Number in Piccoli's ed. of *Le Rime*, 1944. The other sonnet is CXLII.

<sup>2</sup> I discount the story of an edition of *The Divine Comedy* in which Michelangelo drew a series of illustrations and which was lost in a shipwreck. I believe it is now generally discredited.

interval between—the *Dante and Virgil* of 1822 and the Luxembourg Library decoration of 1847. His *Journal*, however, witnesses to a far greater and more continuous cult of Dante. '*Pense au Dante, relis-le continuellement; secoue-toi pour revenir aux grandes idées*' he writes in 1824. And in the same year when he speaks of the books and engravings which never fail to inspire him, he mentions Dante and Michelangelo; and on another day he admonishes himself: '*Recueille-toi profondément devant ta peinture et ne pense qu'au Dante. C'est ceci que j'ai toujours senti en moi.*' And finally I would quote a passage of 1858 which throws some light on the question I shall end with and not try to answer: '*Lu aussi les commentaires de Lamartine sur l'Iliade. . . . Cette lecture réveille en moi l'admiration de tout ce qui ressemble à Homère, entre autres du Shakespeare, du Dante. Il faut avouer que nos modernes (je parle des Racine, des Voltaire) n'ont pas connu ce genre de sublime, ces naïvetés étonnantes qui poétisent les détails vulgaires et en font des peintures pour l'imagination et qui les ravissent.*'

An exactly opposite case to these is found in Rossetti, where iconographical borrowings are far more frequent. I know of no less than 108 examples, though many of them are only pencil studies or mere replicas or variants of the finished water-colours. But we immediately remark that only twenty of them derive from *The Divine Comedy* and that they are limited to six subjects, of which none is from the *Paradiso* and five concern women, treated, I feel, simply as women. His Beatrice remains, even in the Earthly Paradise, the woman of the *Vita Nuova*; or indeed less, for he never seems to have risen to the hope of the divine Beatrice on which Dante all but closes—*spero di dire di lei quello che mai non fu detto d'alcuna*. For, as Mr. T. S. Eliot has said, the *Vita Nuova* is not 'a piece of Pre-Raphaelite tapestry'. The young Dante, in whom the greatest and most austere of all poems was germinating, cannot be reduced to a romantic lover. The study of Rossetti, then, in connexion with our problem, will throw more light on Rossetti than on Dante. He is the type of artist 'illustrator'.

The only two artists of unchallenged greatness and strongly marked individuality who undertook full illustration of Dante, in the sense of a series following him canto by canto, are Botticelli and Blake; and it remains to say something about their work and then to pose my final question.

It happens that we have had recent books on them both—a French edition of the Botticelli drawings with an introduction and



commentary by Mlle Yvonne Batard<sup>1</sup>, and Mr. Roe's book on Blake which is the occasion of this article.

Our whole interpretation of Botticelli's development would be immensely helped if we could determine the date of his Dante drawings. But that seems to be impossible on existing evidence. We have Vasari's statement that he made the designs for Baldini's engravings to the first Florentine edition of 1481. That was before the *Birth of Venus* and his visit to Rome. They do not correspond with any of the known drawings but in Lipmann's opinion were the beginning of that series. But there are other authoritative opinions—Horne's, for example<sup>2</sup>—that they all belong to his later years *after* the impact of Savonarola.<sup>3</sup> We have also the obvious fact that his whole mode of treatment changed when he began the *Paradiso*. Where, then, did Botticelli's 'conversion' begin? With a first brooding on Dante even while he was still close to Lorenzo de' Medici? With the religious frescoes of the Ognissanti at Florence and the Sistine, or with the first effective sermons of Savonarola in the autumn of 1489? Or even with the martyrdom? The *Paradiso*, at least, seems to be most consistent with his very latest visionary painting—the Harvard *Crucifixion*, for example, or the National Gallery *Nativity*.

But since, at present, we can only speculate how the course of his other work corresponds to that of the Dante drawings, I must be content here to trace this independently. At first, Botticelli followed Dante's text closely and tried, by reverting to mediaeval methods, to maintain the purely literary characteristic of a sequence of events in time. He made only one design for each canto<sup>4</sup> but, as he did not select incidents like Blake, he was obliged to repeat the figures of Dante and Virgil several times. He even carried this strip-cartoon technique to the point of giving Dante two heads to suggest a rapid shifting of his attention, for example where in *Inferno* XXXII, 16–19, he looks from the giant's feet to the frozen lake at Virgil's sudden *Guarda come passi*. Or he drew

<sup>1</sup> *Les Dessins de Sandro Botticelli pour la Divine Comédie*, by Yvonne Batard. Olivier Perrin, Paris, 1952. The standard works are by F. Lipmann and J. Strzygowski, but as these are difficult to get and the reproductions in Signor Adolfo Venturi's *Il Botticelli: Interprete di Dante*, Florence, 1921, are abominable, and as the 85 Berlin originals were lost in the war, it must be regretted that Mlle Batard's book just falls short of reproducing them all or any of them very well.

<sup>2</sup> *Alessandro Filipepi, called Sandro Botticelli, Painter of Florence*, by H. P. Horne. Bell, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary of the evidence on Botticelli's relations with Savonarola, see N.G. Cat., *The Earlier Italian Schools*, by Martin Davies, 1951, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> The series never seems to have been complete and many designs were unfinished. Vol. 228. No. 466.

two Virgils back to back to represent him pivoting at *Purgatorio* XIII, 13-15. When the text allowed it, he carried these conventions of movement through more than one canto, struggling, one feels, against the limitations of his art, to maintain the idea of sequence so important to the pilgrimage. A particularly effective example is the passage of the two poets across the blind and motionless frieze of the Envious through the three designs for *Purgatorio* XIII-XV. He also used a further device for the same purpose by indicating at the edges of each design elements which belong to the preceding and subsequent cantos.

None of this could ever quite succeed. But where Botticelli was supremely successful, because it was the language of which he was particularly master, was in his use of linear rhythm to stimulate our sense of movement—the only method really open to the pictorial arts other than the cinema. And it becomes all the more telling when, in the *Paradiso*, he practically abandons the other methods and, indeed, almost all attempt at narrative.

There is another development to be remarked. In the *Inferno* Botticelli concentrated on the external action, which, on the whole, he treated objectively and without close-ups. The individuals are subordinated, sometimes almost wholly obscured, in this general view. Even the Ugolino incident is no more than an item to be searched for. The damned are symbolically naked except where it is part of their punishment to be clothed in lead or the livid colours of envy. But in the *Purgatorio* the individuals become increasingly more conspicuous. We can mark their psychological reactions, since through purgation they are recovering their personalities; they are saving *themselves*. But Botticelli continues the method of narrative through incident until he suddenly abandons it at the very beginning of the *Paradiso*. Here is the greatest of all challenges to the visual arts and one which hardly any of Dante's 'illustrators' took up. Botticelli recognized this, and almost confined himself to the one possible treatment—to mirror the sublime vision, that cannot be captured in the visual artists' material, in the faces and gestures of those who see it—of Dante and Beatrice. In most of the designs they are the only figures and often there is nothing else but the circle in which they are drawn. And even when there are other presences he does not try to draw them, but is content to mark a flame among the circling flames with the written names *piero* or *jachopo* or *adamo*. As the poem becomes more metaphysical, so his treatment becomes more subjec-

tive. Even Dante's clothes reflect his growth to entire spirituality. At first their heavy straight lines are in marked contrast to Beatrice's floating and almost immaterial drapery. Gradually that difference disappears. Botticelli has undertaken to make the invisible visible through the visionary. And yet, oddly enough, in Canto XXVIII he returns to an objective method and depicts the choirs of angels. In Canto XXX he substitutes *putti* for Dante's *faville vive* and it is a poor substitute. Botticelli must have felt that, for he practically stops. There is an unfinished design which suggests the *candida rosa* and the final splendours, but no more. The last three cantos of *The Divine Comedy* are beyond 'illustration' in any form; and perhaps Botticelli's fidelity to Dante's spirit is nowhere more triumphant than in his recognition throughout the *Paradiso* and particularly in this last silence that there are heights open to poetry and music which the visual arts cannot reach. *All'alta fantasia qui mancò possa.*

Botticelli was a Catholic: Blake was not even a Christian. Botticelli struggled to illuminate Dante's art with his own, but they were subject to a common illumination—*un semplice lume . . . l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle*. For Blake, too, God was essentially love, but he gave a different meaning to that idea by his fusion of Eros with Agape. And since he repudiated the rule of law, he repudiated Dante's God and the whole concept of punishment essential to the *Inferno*, and he invested Virgil with his own concept of Christ as the Poet, the Divine Imagination *opposed* to Jehovah. But indeed the whole interweaving of his own symbolism and his own mythology with Dante's is so complex that it cannot be summarized. The result is that his drawings are again and again flat denials of Dante. It is this which gives a unique fascination to the remarkable book before us. In no other case have we such good reproductions of a complete series of 'illustrations' with such a careful and enlightening commentary. Step by step, we can accompany Blake's strange pilgrimage, this great artist travelling beside the greatest and seeing the vision in opposite colours. The divergence becomes perhaps most deeply marked in the last drawing of the few he attempted for the *Paradiso*, where the *candida rosa* is transformed into a vision of triumphant evil, which is the effect, according to Foster Damon,<sup>1</sup> of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth. The very quality which St. Bernard first enunciates in his great prayer at

<sup>1</sup> Quoted and discussed by Roe, pp. 193-4.

the opening of the last canto—the *vergine madre*—is for Blake an offence.

Therefore we find that Blake's drawings are, as a whole, curiously inconsistent. They fall into the three groups of those where his vision opposes Dante's, those where he shares and illustrates Dante's vision and those where, having no vision of his own, he merely follows Dante literally. He does not, therefore, completely follow Dante's sequence, and, unlike Botticelli, he selects. His drawings are almost all close-ups, his approach consistently individualist. There is no correspondence between the number of his designs and the number of cantos.

I am sorry that I have not been able to give a fuller account of this most extraordinary of all interplays between Dante and a creative illustrator, but it is precisely because of its complexity that, as I have said, it cannot be summarized. The consolation is that Mr. Roe's book does the work so excellently and is accessible.

I must repeat that I have only touched here on a few, though the most important, of Dante's choir of 'illustrators'. The great question that remains to be asked at the end is this: why is it constantly asserted that Dante is the most visual of all poets? It is so; but why? What are the precise qualities which make him so? Was he, himself, a man of the double vision? Leonardo Bruni,<sup>1</sup> in the middle of the fifteenth century, said that he drew famously (*egregiamente*) and mentions particularly that he drew the battle of Campaldino, in which he fought. And what did Dante himself mean when he said: *In quel giorno, nel quale si compiva l'anno, che questa donna era fatta de' cittadini di vita eterna, io mi sedea in parte, nella quale ricordandomi di lei, disegnavo un angelo sopra certe tavolette*? If this is to be taken literally, it settles the matter; if figuratively, it is hardly less significant, for it implies that his poetic vision was visual. But on this there is a great deal more to be said.

<sup>1</sup> The importance of Bruni's evidence is admitted by Professor Umberto Cosmo. See his *A Handbook to Dante Studies*, English ed., Blackwell, 1950, p. 16.

# LANGLAND AND THE LITURGICAL TRADITION

By DOM DENYS RUTLEDGE

MR. CHRISTOPHER DAWSON has rendered us such a great service in pointing to Langland's vision as offering a potential solvent of the dualism between religion and the rest of life in the western world that it seems desirable to examine rather more closely the theological basis of that vision. Throughout his work *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* Mr. Dawson was conscious above all of the gulf between religion and culture, between the claims of this world and the other, the seen and the unseen, religious and secular, lay and ecclesiastical, spiritual and material, natural and supernatural. There is a dualism apparent that has never been completely surmounted; religion has failed permanently to penetrate the rest of life; the transfiguration prefigured by that of Thabor has not yet been completely accomplished in this world of time and space. Movements of spiritual reform in the past he sees as essentially flights to the desert or withdrawal to the cloister, producing local concentrations of spiritual energy, with indeed wide spheres of influence, but not providing such a wider and deeper infusion of religion into secular affairs as to gather into one organic whole every department of Christian life, rather by the very intensity of their reborn zeal tending to emphasize the distance between professional religion and the rest of life. They have served a purpose analogous to that of an infusion of new blood from outside, giving a temporary heightening of vitality; but the body has failed to respond by a normal, natural pulse from within, so it has continued to languish.

Langland's vision Dawson sees as coming at the climax of 700 years of development, shewing 'for a moment, by a flash of poetic and prophetic inspiration . . . how the dualism might have been surmounted and overcome'.<sup>1</sup> 'His view of life,' we are told, 'and his scale of values are no less other-worldly than those of the most

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 270.

ascetic representatives of the earlier medieval tradition. But they no longer find expression in the flight to the desert or withdrawal to the cloister. For Langland the other world is always immediately present in every human relationship, and every man's daily life is organically bound up with the life of the Church. Thus every state of life in Christendom is a Christian life in the full sense—an extension of the life of Christ on earth. And the supernatural order of grace is founded and rooted in the natural order and the common life of humanity.' For him 'religion was not a particular way of life but the way of all life'. In all this he sees Langland as essentially a representative of the layman, the spokesman of 'the minds of the masses' interpreting the 'traditions of the common people'.

Now if we are to appreciate fully the significance of this for our present problems it is necessary to realize first that this tradition of the common man was simply the liturgical tradition of the Church, that view of life presupposed by the Church's liturgical worship and in part produced by it; and, secondly, that the periodic movements of reform within the monastic order were—due allowance being made for exaggeration inevitable in a reform—simply attempts to restore this tradition when the original native spirit had been lost or obscured. Mr. Dawson has himself indicated very clearly the essential nature of this liturgical tradition at its source, in the first ages of the Church; it was one of complete harmony and integration in the whole of creation, of a perfect fusion of religious and secular, of this world and the other, all things 'reconciled in Christ'. 'It is almost impossible to convey to the modern mind,' he tells us, 'the realism and objectivity with which the Christian of those days viewed the liturgical participation in the mysteries of salvation.'<sup>1</sup> It was a 'sacramental and mystical re-presentation' in which 'the eternal world invaded and transfused the world of time'. A world outside space and time, that is, is presented in time and space under the material symbols and activities of this world. The liturgical tradition of the early Church does indeed tend to see all material things as, in their degree, symbols of the divine, to see the divine as informing all material things and so, after a fashion, capable of being discerned and contemplated in and through them. In this way it resolved the opposition—or apparent opposition—between body and soul, material and spiritual, religious and secular; the material symbol

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 41.



presents the spiritual in a form capable of being grasped by the senses. It is into this religion that all are initiated by baptism; it transcends therefore, in its essentials, all distinction of class and profession, and it fills and embraces the whole of life. It was this realist, objective, sacramental religion that was the life of the Middle Ages and finds such clear expression in Langland, however much its true nature may have been misunderstood and obscured by its professional exponents. It will be suggested later that it is this 'prophetic inspiration [of Langland's] of the manner in which the dualism might have been surmounted and overcome' that is in fact finding its fulfilment today. This dualism is being overcome not 'in terms of ecclesiastical organization and government' nor by the foundation of new orders of professional religion, but from within the lay and secular sphere itself; humanism transfigured, the layman conscious of himself and of his 'material', 'secular' world as also religious, as transfused and possessed by the divine, 'a Christian life in the full sense', and, in the realization of this, opening his heart and mind fully to the inspiration of the Spirit. Of this new, spiritually adult layman, the heir to the former ages, Langland's *Piers Plowman*, born at the dawn of the modern age, might well be taken as the type and personification, a figure prophetic of an age to come.

The custodians of this full liturgical tradition, despite many vicissitudes, were the members of the monastic order, and nowhere more than in these British Isles. For the monastic order was rooted and founded in this liturgical tradition, and its form of life exhibited, at least in its first fervour, the age of its expansion, just this perfect harmony and fusion of all the basic elements of human life that comes to the surface again in Langland's vision. But to understand this aright we must consider rather more precisely what is the truth beneath the customary phrase, employed here by Dawson, 'flight to the desert' or 'withdrawal to the cloister'.

These periodic movements of 'flight' and 'withdrawal' were in fact nothing less than attempts to retain in the world an ideal embodiment of Langland's vision of life, shewing the means by which alone, as Mr. Dawson sees, the dualism of religion and the rest of life could be resolved. It is unfortunate that phrases such as 'flight to the desert' and 'withdrawal to the cloister' tend to convey to the popular mind a suggestion of some form of dematerialization. In fact the basic needs of human life can never be dispensed with, though they may profitably be reduced to a minimum; nor



can man, at least in his normal mode of operation, approach the spiritual except in and through the material: he can never have one without the other; never, in the colloquial phrase, get away from it all. Moreover, even those who fled to the desert tended, with rare exceptions, to settle in large groups of even thousands, and instead of seeing them as living solitary and alone in a vast expanse of desert, a truer picture, at least in externals, would perhaps be rather that of a shanty town of the North-West at the peak of a gold—or possibly uranium—rush. Similarly the cloister (once this first impulse had crystallized into a definite pattern) enclosing in a restricted space people of varying temperaments and dispositions, joined by no natural tie, in constant hourly contact, offered less opportunity of individual withdrawal and solitude than most lives in the world.<sup>1</sup> It would be more correct to see such flights and withdrawals as only the negative aspect of what was in its essence a positive process; they left an imperfect larger world in order to found a better one, to build an ideal world; and it was this ideal world, expressing the full liturgical tradition of primitive times, that furnished the model and inspiration of mediaeval western civilization. They trimmed and pruned and rearranged, and doubtless at times they produced a wrong emphasis here or there, but what they worked on was simply the basic needs and conditions of all human life everywhere and in every age; only for the first time since the fall of man they fashioned of them a full, whole, complete human life with all its elements co-ordinated in their due order and proportion. The periodic movements of reform, which Mr. Dawson so rightly sees as bringing a new influx of life to the whole Church, were simply attempts to restore to this model, ideal world an orientation and proportion continually being lost or obscured. For there was—there is—a constant tendency for a monastic community to become absorbed back into the world it has left, to acquire wealth with its attendant social and economic obligations, to assume some function foreign to its nature in and for the larger world, until at last it becomes an integral part of society, standing or falling with it, rather than that separate, complete, self-contained world required by its institution. It is not suggested that the monastic community set up deliberately and self-consciously as a working model for the world of a complete Christian way of life;

<sup>1</sup> The reader might profitably consider the form of life suggested by the *Constitutions of Lanfranc* (Nelson's ed.).

simply that this was an accidental effect—a by-product it has been rightly called—of its devotion to its true vocation, to be 'truly seeking God', establishing 'a school of the Lord's service'.

It has been suggested to the writer, while this was still in typescript, that 'the basic needs and conditions of all human life' must include provision for its propagation, even if one can argue that 'a full, whole, complete human life' is possible for the individual without it; that the layman therefore deserves an explanation.

The simple fact is, of course, that the monastic community recruits its new members from sources external to itself. The answer to the stock objection: But suppose everybody became monks and nuns? is easy enough. Everyone will not become monks and nuns, but *qui potest capere capiat*. In this respect it approaches rather the 'angelic' life of heaven, where 'they shall neither marry nor be married'. It forms thus a permanent link between the imperfect life of earth and its perfection in heaven, partaking of both and leading from one to the other. So early monastic writers saw it also as filling now the rôle of the communities of prophets of the Old Testament; looking into heaven and, especially by the example of their lives, 'speaking out' what they saw there, living witnesses to the primacy of the spiritual.

To leave it at that would, however, be to evade the real underlying question, and to miss the point of Langland's solution of what does undoubtedly appear to many laymen as a problem. They admit, and even realize vaguely, the superiority of virginity over the married state, yet feel at the same time that the propagation of children is a perfection, giving a completion and fullness to life, that is wanting to virginity. They see the two states, that is, as not only not related, but as in positive opposition the one to the other, as mutually exclusive; whereas for Langland they appear rather as blooms of increasing beauty and perfection springing from the same 'ragged root' and 'rough briars': 'Do Best out of Do Well and Do Better.'

For this is an instance of the apparent paradox that runs right through Christianity, of finding one's life by losing it, of discovering things by walking away from them. Virginity is not, in fact, sterile; on the contrary it is more fruitful than marriage; fruitful in a higher and fuller manner; the barren made 'a joyful mother of children'.

The union of marriage, with the production of children as its issue, is but a local, temporal, restricted expression of that union

of the soul with God (sometimes experienced and described by the mystics as a 'mystical marriage') in which the soul is united in God, in the most intimate manner possible, to the whole of his creation, and shares in the paternity of God from which 'all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title', 'able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham'. In God the monk thus encompasses and embraces the whole universe, one with God the creator of all; in the Communion of Saints he finds the only complete *communicatio bonorum*, of which carnal union is an earthly symbol. So for St. Thomas (S. III, 29, 2. c, and Suppl. 49, 3) it is the indissoluble union of souls that is the *forma* of the sacrament of matrimony, establishing it in its species, and true marriage may exist without consequent *copula*. Perhaps it is here that ultimately the explanation of so many broken marriages is to be sought and the universal poetic theme of the failure of human love.

This is a notion not easy for our modern minds, yet it is implicit in the Church's liturgical tradition. Spiritual fatherhood is thus not a mere metaphorical phrase: it is the higher that contains the lower, the greater that includes the less. So when new life comes to a monastic community, whether in childhood or maturity, the mode of transport, stork, plane or helicopter, is of secondary importance; the community may well, in full reality, consider itself to have given birth to it in both material and spiritual spheres, in a manner of which carnal procreation in this earthly state is a material image and symbol, a sacrament.

To anticipate further queries beyond the scope of this article it is helpful to remember that men are here considered not as they would have been without the Fall, nor as they might be in some hypothetical ideal condition that can never exist in this world, but as they are in fact.

It would be out of place here to attempt a sketch of the vicissitudes of the monastic order in the attempt to maintain its ideal. The ideal was constantly reasserted, and so in some measure the liturgical tradition of the patristic age was carried over through the Middle Ages to the eve of modern times, to appear in this uncompromising form in Langland. Yet there can be no reasonable doubt that the change, beginning very early, from a community of laymen to a 'clerical religion', with the full monastic state no longer open to the layman, and the rapid decline of manual work by the monks themselves, did more than anything else to form the gulf, the dualism, between religion and the rest of

life. The perfect practice of religion, the Christian life in the full sense, was made to appear as incompatible with manual work, material things and the ordinary duties of the common man; worse still, it was made to appear as open only to the cleric: religion being the business of the monk and the cleric, the rest of men consigned to varying degrees of exterior darkness. Carried to its logical conclusion in the Cluniac movement, it appeared that the perfection of religion was to be measured by the frequency of ecclesiastical functions, and that the perfect, the ideal, Christian life was that in which as nearly as possible the whole day was spent in church. This, we say, was the appearance given; there was never any doubt of the truth inherent in the Church's teaching and her liturgical worship, or of the existence and recognition of the true tradition in the monastic order as a whole. The liturgical tradition, the tradition of the Church, embodied in the monastic rule as a complete way of life, continued to be presented by monastic communities as a living spectacle; with many aberrations and varying degrees of success, yet preserved and transmitted sufficiently to reappear in this vernacular account of Langland's vision on the Malvern Hills. It is the significance of this for our own day as providing a key to the understanding of present tendencies that we wish to emphasize here.

It must suffice to draw attention to two classes of phenomena: (1) A wider diffusion of religion, a religious renaissance coming rather from the laity than the religious orders, whose numbers are tending to decrease; (2) The rise of lay Christian communities. Both these phenomena, it will be suggested, are inspired by a revival of the original, full liturgical tradition with its capacity for seeing life whole. The first springs from a heightened realization of the layman's dignity as a full member of the Body of Christ, a truth expressed so clearly in *Mystici Corporis Christi*. The second expresses a conviction of the essential interaction between religion and the rest of life; that a revival of religion involves a revival of the natural rhythm, order and proportion of human life, with a rearrangement, possibly, of social and economic factors; that while it may not be possible to transform the world overnight, it is always possible to transform one's own immediate milieu, though this may call for a breaking away analogous to the 'flight to the desert' of the earlier Christian enthusiasts.

To take a few instances of (1) as they occur to mind: There is discernible, parallel to the 'secularization' of modern life that is so

often deplored, evidence of an increasing interest in religion, suggesting that a swing of the pendulum may result in a revival in which the former dualism is overcome. One thinks of the extraordinary interest in books on religious topics differing as widely as those of Thomas Merton and Graham Greene, for example, the popularity of Mgr. Fulton Sheen's broadcasts and of films with religious motifs, and a whole class of novels informed by the idea, however crudely expressed, that the life of Christ is somehow repeated in the lives of ordinary human men occupied in ordinary human activities. 'Revivalists' are not readily accepted in this country. Perhaps for that reason the extraordinarily large audiences attracted recently by the preaching of Billy Graham have a greater than usual significance. Not less significant is the increased readiness observed in Catholic commentators on this phenomenon to admit the possibility of a diffusion of grace beyond the limits of the Body of the Church.

Then there is a tendency to see religion where it was not seen before and to see it as no longer incompatible with full participation in normal, healthy human activity. So last summer the *Catholic Herald*, greatly daring, came out with a picture of bathing belles on its front page, hastening to reassure us that they looked good because they were good; they were in fact no less than the leaders of Catholic Action Cells throughout the country, met in solemn conference and enjoying an hour off. They were, that is, of the Catholic *élite*, and the reality of their religion was reflected in the reality of their natural happiness and grace.

It is possible to discern also a clearer recognition of the fact that a fully Christian life is to be found outside the walls of a monastic enclosure. So we have the spectacle, in fact and fiction, of nuns 'Leaping over the Wall' and 'Returning'. A full discussion of such cases is not possible here, but there does seem a suggestion that they have at last found Charing Cross with Francis Thompson and Battersea with G. K. Chesterton. Perhaps the same suggestion is present in the recent biography of Edith Stein. We gain the impression that she had attained to spiritual maturity already, in the world, before becoming Sister Teresia Benedicta a Cruce. The entry into Carmel one might have expected to see as the crowning consummation in the designs of Providence; but it was apparently not so to be. The life begun in the world was to be consummated in the world: one almost said outside the enclosure, but indeed it was rather within a stricter enclosure, by a death horribly symbol-

ized on the jacket of the American edition by a cross of barbed wire and a name written in blood.

We have, on the one hand, the growing number of layfolk who set out deliberately to teach religion and to convey spiritual advice, whether in profoundly theological works or in popular essays by representative public characters. On the other hand there are those who are in the public eye openly and uncompromisingly Catholic yet, as the present writer once heard it expressed, perfectly normal in every other way. Gilbert Harding and Wilfred Pickles, for instance, seem to enjoy public favour through sheer robust humanity; yet it is not possible to be fully human without being also Christian.

These are a few random instances of the wider, deeper diffusion of religion in the secular sphere, through which the secular is becoming religious. It is religion not imposed from without, by a body distinct from the secular sphere, but arising spontaneously from within that sphere in proportion to the extent that an artificial dualism between religion and the rest of life has been surmounted.

The rise of the lay Christian community, to take the second instance, is one of the most striking phenomena of modern times. It remains to be seen whether it will produce an effect comparable to that of the lay monastic community, the original monastic community, of the early Church. These are not 'professional' religious; that is they belong to no religious order or congregation and are particularly anxious not to, though some of them take private vows. Yet they are deliberately organized, with the Church's liturgical worship as their centre and inspiration, in a life that is totally religious, so that for want of a better word they are distinguished from 'religious' of the religious orders by being called 'secular'; they are, or may become, 'secular institutes'. They are 'secular', yet they are also wholly and completely religious. For a brief, lucid account of one such community the reader might be referred to 'Taena and the Land', an article in the *Life of the Spirit*, February-March 1954. Such communities seem to feel that in this way they will more effectively establish a simple totally Christian 'way of life', as distinct from 'doing something' within the distorted economy of the larger world—the inevitable question always asked of a religious community: 'What do they do?' They will not be confined by the traditions, habits and commitments of the regular religious orders, developed under condi-



tions very different from those of today and now hardened into a form difficult, if not impossible, of adaptation. Moreover—and this seems the most impelling motive—they will be able to enjoy that full participation in the Church's liturgical worship which is not open to laymen in the religious orders, and be free to develop a way of life in which religion and the rest of life find a complete harmony and fusion.

Such, if one understands them rightly, is their argument, and if the Father of Monks were, for a space, to descend the carpet-strewn and lamp-hung way by which he ascended, assuredly he would find much that was familiar. The wheel has, in fact, come full circle: back to the first Christians of the *Acts*, with 'all things common', with a movement at first analogous to that of the first 'flight to the desert', then to that of the original monastic lay community, in each case with the Church's liturgical tradition as the source of its inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

Something of this Langland saw so long ago, 'every state of life in Christendom a Christian life in the full sense—an extension of the life of Christ on earth', 'religion the way of all life'. At one time Christ was seen under the monk's cowl, at another in the friar's frock—'but that was long ago, in St. Francis' time'; Langland now finds him in the dress of Peter the Plowman. There is the implication that, as once a new lease of life came to the Church through the monastic order, then later through the Friars, so now it will come through the lay members of the Mystical Body.

In a reassertion of lost values there is almost inevitably exaggeration. It should, however, be realized clearly that it is the deplored secularization of the present age that is being met by a spiritualization of the secular, an atheistic communist totalitarianism by a life of total Christianity. It is sometimes suggested that these movements of secular, lay, initiative are at heart anti-clerical. Surely this is completely to miss the whole significance of the tendency, to see it in contrasting, even opposing, mutually ex-

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that Huysmans, half a century ago, in *L'Oblat* (Ch. xii), saw this as already *dans l'air* and as destined to take shape. Considering the threatened expulsion of the religious orders from France he suggests that communities of monastic lay oblates might be the only means, under Providence, of preserving there the monastic tradition. (The application of this to countries now under Communist domination is surely worth considering.) Such communities he envisaged as essentially Benedictine in tradition, directed and organized by at least one monk (if necessary in disguise), yet with the members living each in his own small establishment, rather after the plan of a Béguinage or Charterhouse (or, one might add, the old Celtic monastic communities).



clusive terms of secular and religious, clerical and lay. It is rather a new realization of the Mystical Body as an organic whole, united in one life, each part with its proper function; the Church conceived no longer as just the hierarchy, but as the whole body of the faithful. This suggests the answer to the charge frequently made that the Church has failed to meet the present situation, that 'man finds himself in a world of material progress which has no spiritual meaning for him and which the churches have failed to spiritualize'.<sup>1</sup> This is the Church 'spiritualizing' the material; no less the Church because she is working through her lay members who are applying her liturgical tradition in her own traditional manner. In fact the practical effect of this is to produce a closer union and a fuller mutual understanding and spirit of co-operation between clerical and lay and a tapping of new, almost inexhaustible sources of energy in the service of religion. We already have evidence of this in the attempts being made in different countries to organize the parish as a community with the liturgy as the centre of its whole life; the sense that everything should 'grow round the altar', 'grow from the altar'; the recognition of the fact that the parish is the Church in miniature and may mirror the Church in its various aspects and manifold activities as faithfully as did the early monastic communities.<sup>2</sup> We see the same tendency, the closer union between religious and secular, in the co-operative schemes begun under clerical inspiration in places as far apart as the Hebrides, with their *Outer Isles Crofters Company*, and the internationally famed co-operative movement in Nova Scotia inspired by St. Francis Xavier University.

Disappointment and a measure of disillusionment have been expressed with the result of the modern liturgical revival. There is a feeling in some quarters that the original momentum has ceased, that 'the restoration of all things in Christ' that was hoped for from it has somehow failed in its promise; that the proposed

<sup>1</sup> So Edwin Muir, interpreting Mr. Spender, in the *Observer*, Sunday, 6 December 1953.

<sup>2</sup> One might consider in this regard the parallel of what Edmund Bishop has called (*Journal of Theological Studies*, October 1912, p. 28) the strong 'congregationalist' sense of the early Christian communities, as seen especially in the Syriac Didascalia, with, as its liturgical expression, 'the stress laid on the offerings of the people, especially of the bread and wine for the communion', at a period, that is, when holy communion was 'an inevitable incident' of attendance at Sunday Mass, even for the children. This 'congregationalist' sense he finds 'clearly perceptible in documents of the second and third centuries, the expression of which, however, is singularly weakened by the close of the fourth'.

(I am indebted to the editor for drawing my attention to this article by Edmund Bishop.)

changes in the liturgy may help, but that the glad confident morning has passed. The question is discussed in the current number of *Liturgie und Mönchtum*.<sup>1</sup> The truth seems to be that the Church's liturgy has so far been presented in this modern revival only as a way of worship, not as a way of life, 'the way of all life', filling every department of it and penetrating to all its recesses, as that complete fusion and harmony of religion and the rest of life that Langland saw. It is towards this that our lay activity, and, most clearly of all, our lay communities are feeling their way, painfully and with much labour.

Whether the monastic order is destined to reassume on any wide scale its ancient rôle of model, guide and rallying-point of this latest expression of the Church's full liturgical tradition is not yet evident. There have for long been indications that it may; one thinks of Siluvaigiri in India, Chevetogne in Belgium, Hay-les-Roses in France, Mount Saviour in the U.S.A. That the necessary spiritual energy is still present we can hardly doubt; that this would be a reassertion of its native spirit and former tradition is abundantly clear; the future cannot be foretold.

<sup>1</sup> Heft xiv, *Erneuerung der Liturgie*, Verlag Ars Liturgica, Maria Laach.

# THE HOUSE OF BURGUNDY AND PRINSENHOF, BRUGES<sup>1</sup>

By JOYCE M. WINMILL

THAT the world-wide commerce of Bruges and the grandeur of the reigning house of Burgundy mounted side by side is in itself a paradox, for on the one hand the political strength, intrigue, and immense wealth of the Dukes of Burgundy placed the Low Countries at the height of the western mediaeval world, and on the other their insatiable demands for money oppressed the burghers, taxed the town and destroyed its liberties and charters.

The trading world approached the markets of Bruges by sea from Damme, where the famous lock belonged to the city. Large boats had to be unloaded into those which could navigate the canals, but smaller ones continued their voyage as they were, down the straight shining path of the Zwyn, the tower of Notre Dame rising like a great beacon at the end of its three-mile length, right into the covered dock of the Waterhalle, astride the Reye, on the east side of the Grand' Place. There merchants from all over Europe and the Near East bargained among the bales of cloth which constituted Bruges' greatest trade, wool from England and Scotland, furs from Russia and Tartary, butter and falcons from Norway, Rhenish wine, olives and saffron from Spain, armour from Italy, cloth of gold, silks, scents and spices from the Holy Land. Over the Halles, where the traders had their stalls, towered the belfry, keeping watch and ward over the city, as it does today, its bells calling the people in times of triumph, and in times of danger and disaster, while a statue of Our Lady of the Halles, always an object of special veneration, has watched the drama of the market place from her niche over the doorway for over six hundred years.

Under the shadow of the belfry, side by side with the com-

<sup>1</sup> *Marie de Bourgogne*, by Charles Dessart, Brussels, 1945; *Causerie sur la période Bourguignonne à Bruges*, *Feuilletons de la Patrie*, 1921-22, nos. 3-57, by Baron A. van Zuylen van Nyevelt; *The Story of Prinsenhof*, by Mother St. Jerome; *Bruges and its Past*, by Malcolm Letts and A. G. Berry, 1924; *Registers of English Franciscan Nuns at Brussels and at Bruges and Taunton, 1619-1821*, Catholic Records Society, Vol. XXIV (1923).

merce of Bruges, was interwoven the religious life of the city. The missionary work of St. Amand, St. Boniface, St. Eloi and St. Donatian had laid the foundations of great faith and devotion, which found renewed inspiration in the possession of the great relic of the Precious Blood, brought back from Jerusalem in 1147, by Thierry of Alsace, and which may almost be said to be the heart of Bruges, shrined in the lovely Chapelle du Saint Sang.

The old castle of the Counts of Flanders adjoined the ninth-century chapel of St. Basil, over which, in the fifteenth century, the Chapelle du Saint Sang was built; across the Burg was the church of St. Donatian, and so the seat of government, the life and movement of the city, and its religious inspiration were cradled round the Halles and the belfry, and surrounded by the Reye.

It has been said that if John II of France had foreseen the picture of political power and prosperity that he was engendering, he would never have given to his younger son, Philip le Hardi, the dukedom of Burgundy. With Philip's marriage to Margarite, widow of Philippe de Rouvre, and one of the greatest heiresses of her time, a new dynasty was born. When her father, Count of Flanders, Nevers and Rethel died in 1384, his lands were thus joined with those of Burgundy, and the Burgundian court began to rival that of France, devitalized by the Hundred Years' War and the Black Death.

The pomp and extravagance of the House of Burgundy is well brought out by Froissart, and nowhere is it better stressed than in the story of the ransoming from the Turks of Jean sans Peur, son of Philip and Margarite. Flanders was taxed heavily to pay the ransom of 200,000 ducats, for, Froissart says, towns such as Bruges abounded in wealth from their commerce. Meanwhile, the prisoners, on their way home, 'spent their time most joyously at Venice'. There was the matter, too, of a present of white gersfalcons, procured with great difficulty, and sent as a present to the Sultan Bajazet, with Arras tapestry and scarlet and crimson cloths.

Philip le Hardi always remained French, and rarely visited Bruges or Ghent, but in the person of Jean sans Peur, the lilies of France were crushed indifferently beneath the paws of the lion of Burgundy, and with his assassination in 1419, Burgundy turned still further from France. His policy of strengthening the territorial rights of the Low Countries was realized by his son, Philip le Bon, and under him the great palace of Prinsenhof at Bruges was reconstructed in all its magnificence.

The country's most brilliant period of architecture and sculpture poured its wealth into the building. The palace itself was of brick, banded with white stone, a slate roof with many dormers, and mullioned and transomed windows, facing south on to the courtyard and the great gateway, blazoned with the ducal arms, under a statue of Our Lady and Child, leading into the rue Nord du Sablon. At the left wing of the main block rose the lofty keep, surmounted with two stone lions carrying banners, a little round tower with a pierced hexagonal parapet, and a minstrels' gallery. On the front of the keep a large clock told the hours. To the right rose the campanile of the chapel, the façade of the duke's private oratory, and a corner tower capped with white stone. The whole building formed a large square, and through all the vicissitudes of 500 years the shape of the boundaries has been kept. On the eastern side the mint, furnaces, and Treasurer's house still keep their significance in the rue de la Monnaie; to the west the *garde robe*, kitchens, bake-houses and wine-cellar bounded on the rue des Receveurs, together with the games-room and the famous bathrooms, nearly seventy feet long and thirty feet high. To the north was the separate establishment of l'Hôtel Vert, so called from its green-tiled roof, reserved first for the exclusive use of Philip le Bon, and later for his son Charles, giving on the rue du Marecage, leading down to the old parish church of St. Jacques—often visited by Charles, who was largely responsible for the building of the south aisle.

In the stables were horses given by various monarchs and ambassadors from England, France and Spain, and sumptuous coaches, one covered in cloth of gold, while in the menagerie was an assortment of strange animals, including a lion for which the town had to provide three sheep a week, and a little pet bear given by the town of Mons.

The accounts show entries of *grant quantité de rosiers*, red and white, cypress and cherry trees, rosemary, violets, marjoram, lavender and eglantine, some ordered by the hundred, which went to beautify the gardens and surround the tennis court, in an effort to recapture the luxuriant growth of the Midi.

As the autumn winds swept in to Bruges from the North Sea, the Burgundians must have sighed for the warmth of their native country, where in the prolonged summer the vines ripened on the hillsides and the valley meadows were starred with flowers.

Such was the shell of Prinsenhof. Inside it was furnished with

immense artistic wealth. As in every home, succeeding generations and family happenings left their mark, in this case influenced by the luxury and courtly life of France, *le siècle d'argent* of the fourteenth century. A great library was inherited from Philip le Hardi, who was a patron of painters, writers, and miniaturists. The contribution of Jean sans Peur was in treasures of great beauty of goldsmiths' and silversmiths' art, jewellery, enamels and tapestry. The marriage of Philip le Bon with Isabel of Portugal brought alterations and improvements on a magnificent scale. The great new banqueting hall, looking on to the garden, was hung with cloth of gold, crimson, blue and green, embroidered with the ducal arms, and a superb tapestry representing the story of the Golden Fleece, the new Order instituted by Philip in honour of his duchess.

The chapel, dedicated to St. Christopher, with its great window by Chrétien van de Voorde, the first glass-painter in Bruges to draw his scenes from legendary sources, was hung with rich embroideries showing the story of the Passion—the private oratory for the duke and duchess adjoined the chapel with a view through to the altar.

The brilliant, political marriages of their son, Charles, first to Catherine of France, and secondly to Isabel of Bourbon, meant fresh temporal magnificence, but the birth of a daughter to Isabel in 1457 brought a child to the House of Burgundy whose humanity and charm have never been forgotten, nor her efforts to stabilize the extravagance of the times—Marie de Bourgogne.

As a small child she spent most of her time at Prinsenhof, secure in her mother's love, and that of her grandmother Isabel—uncertain of her father's terrible rages. When she was eight, her mother died, but three years later her father brought home a third wife, Margaret of York, not much older than she was, and whom she was to love as a sister. The fantastic splendour of the wedding celebrations astonished all Europe, and must have been indeed an astonishment to a child. New roofs and floors, windows and doors, were put in at Prinsenhof, and a great banqueting hall built at Brussels was brought to Bruges by water and set up in the tennis court. The rooms were freshly hung with tapestries—the room of Marie de Bourgogne with some depicting great forest trees, that of Margarite d'Yorke with the history of Lucrece, colours of red, white and green typifying a margarite, and a bed draped in cloth of gold.



On the day of the triumphal entry, sounds of deafening cheers, drums and trumpets came to the waiting Prinsenhof, and heralded the young duchess, richly crowned and with doves flying round her litter, as she was borne through the marvellous decorations which Hugo van der Goes had painted for the streets of Bruges and Prinsenhof—the beginning of banquets, entertainments, jousts and tournaments which lasted for a week, and only at King Arthur's court, it was said, had the like ever been seen before.

The marriage of the heiress of such an inheritance was of supreme international importance. From the age of five a file of suitors negotiated and intrigued or came under the schemes of Charles' vast ambition. The little five-year-old Maximilian of Austria, proposed by the Pope in 1463, was, after many hazards, destined to be Marie's husband in 1477, eight months after her father's death before Nancy.

Marie de Bourgogne inherited a country threatened by France, and exasperated by the autocratic rule of her house. She was wise enough to do all in her power to meet the burghers' claims and restore self-government, and Maximilian was hailed as a second saviour, bringing the strength of imperial power. On the belfry of Bruges was lettered 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord': across the Grand' Place, in the Cranenberg, nine years later, Maximilian was held prisoner for his treachery and vacillation, and Marie de Bourgogne was dead. The glories of Flanders had perished. The painters of Bruges who depicted great wealth and the insecurity of the times had spoken truly.

The beloved duchess, who kept herself entirely apart from her husband's intrigues, who denied herself for her people, and shared their joys and sorrows—skating like any burgher's wife on the frozen Minne Water, and walking barefoot on pilgrimage through the city in the processions of the Saint Sang—had died tragically at the age of twenty-five. A hawking expedition had left Prinsenhof one March morning for the woods of Wynendale. Marie's horse shied, her saddle slipped, and she was thrown across a fallen tree. She was taken first of all to the eleventh-century château of Wynendale, restored at great cost by Jean sans Peur, and next day in a litter back to Bruges. At first there was hope, but by the 25th March public prayers were ordered in all churches, and the Blessed Sacrament carried through the city. Two days later the relic of the Saint Sang was taken to Marie de



Bourgogne's room, and remained twenty-four hours at Prinsenhof, but on the 27th, not long after *couvre-feu* had rung from the belfry, a great candle was lit at the foot of her bed, and all Flanders was in mourning.

Before the High Altar at Notre Dame, her embalmed body was laid to rest, and over it, twenty years later, was erected the marvellous tomb of black marble and gilded copper which is one of the glories of Bruges—the work of Pierre de Beckere, a Brussels goldsmith. Marie wears no jewellery except her bracelets and a seven-pointed coronet over a jewelled net; her exquisitely modelled hands are joined in prayer. Round the top of the tomb are the arms of the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, and those of the Holy Roman Empire. The epitaph in old French is at the head of the tomb, the arms of Mary and Maximilian at the foot. Round the tomb the evangelists stand at the four corners, and angels hold enamelled escutcheons, suspended by buckled belts, from the branches of the genealogical tree. Later the tomb of Charles le Téméraire was placed alongside, but, beautiful though it is, it does not bear comparison with that of his daughter. One is a beautiful flowing handwork design of the Middle Ages; the other inferior cast work of the Renaissance.

Besides the tomb, there are many portraits of Marie de Bourgogne in Bruges, in painting and carving—perhaps the most beautiful being that of St. Catherine in the Mystical Marriage, by Hans Memling, at *l'Hôpital* St. Jean. With the magnificent black and gold skirt of her robe, bordered with ermine, and patterned with golden pineapples, spread out over her wheel and the carpet before the Virgin and Child, she has turned back the ermine cuff, on her tight red velvet sleeve, in preparation for the Child to place the marriage ring on the third finger of her left hand—the hands that were left ringless on her tomb: it is just the same face, tip-tilted nose, rounded forehead and resolute little mouth and chin. Her father's portrait, with the tawny colouring which was to descend to the sandy hair and complexion of her son, Philip le Beau, appears as the left-hand king in Memling's 'Adoration of the Magi'—the Child gives his attention to the golden gift held by the Téméraire, rather than to those brought by the other kings. He may be the St. George in shining black armour in Van Eyck's 'Madonna with the Infant Christ', which shows the rich background of gorgeous hangings known so well to painters attached to the Burgundian court.

Philip le Beau brought his wife, Jeanne of Castile, to Prinsenhof in 1497, but was crowned King of Castile soon after, and died in Spain at the age of twenty-eight, his heart being brought back and buried in his mother's tomb. His son, the great Charles V, was sixteen when he was created Count of Flanders amid scenes of extraordinary splendour at Bruges, but anxiety and distress lay beneath the pomp and pageantry:

*Je ne voy que foles et folz . . .  
La fin s'approche, en verite . . .  
Tout va mal . . .*

The Zwyn was silting up, and merchant strangers leaving on account of the general unrest. It was beyond Charles' power to revive the prosperity of Bruges, even had he had the desire. Much of the Burgundian treasure had been dissipated during his father's minority: the Flemish supremacy in art was waning, and giving way to that of the Renaissance. The scene shifted to the valley of the Loire and Spain, and away from les Pays Bas.

In 1649 Philip IV sold the palace of Prinsenhof to Roger de Ghelders, a wealthy merchant. He immediately started to build on the property, and turned it into a money-making proposition, and therefore today there are hardly any traces left of its old magnificence, or of the building which had welcomed such diverse men as Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Wolsey, and William Caxton, Governor of the Merchant Adventurers at Bruges.

In 1662 the Third Order Regular of English Franciscan nuns, founded by Father John Vennings at Brussels in 1619, moved from Nieuport 'bee reason of its bad Aire and subiectness to warres', and bought the old palace for 2200 florins freehold. It was in a ruinous condition internally and needed extensive alterations, particularly as teaching was one of the objects of the Community. The nuns took possession early in 1663, under Mother Susan Gabrielle Brinkhurst, fourth Abbess, and on Candlemas Day the first novice was clothed. On 18 May 1664 the church and convent were dedicated to Our Lady of Doulours, a devotion 'w<sup>ch</sup> euer hath been Practysed in this houes, euen by Philip y<sup>e</sup> first King of Spain who was born here, in y<sup>e</sup> little tower'. He commenced a Congregation, and instituted a yearly procession to St. Saviour's, bearing a life-size statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, which continued till the French Revolution. By 1668 a school was

opened with fifteen boarders, mostly daughters of English Catholics, but the finances of the convent were in a parlous state. The debts amounted to £3850, 'the masens debt alone is found to be 1000 pound', and all the plate of the house was in pawn. Mother Margaret Clare Roper, elected Abbess in 1700, by her business ability restored the fortunes of the convent, which had been on the verge of dissolution, and at her death in 1719 the house was out of debt. After the war of the Spanish Succession, in 1714, Belgium was transferred to Austria, and on the accession of the Emperor Joseph II in 1780 a dire epoch began for all religious. By his Edict of 1782 many convents were suppressed, and the Community at Prinsenhof decided to sell their valuables and save them from confiscation—'also to Keep the small Principall of Money we have to live upon'. They sold all their table and church plate for £697, and made a present of eleven of their best pictures, their damask table linen, their albs and surplices trimmed with Brussels lace, to Thomas Weld of Lulworth Castle, for which he gave them £150. During the next year they mortgaged the school, house, and garden, for 700 Louis d'or, and paid off a debt of £700.

At the time of the French Revolution royalty came again to Prinsenhof in the persons of the Duke of York, who besought the prayers of the Community for the success of his arms against the French at Valenciennes, and his brother Prince Ernest Augustus later in the year. In the early spring of 1794 the French defeated the English at Dunkerque and fell back on Bruges. After some indecision at Prinsenhof, and with the worsening of the situation, the nuns decided to leave, and very early on the morning of Trinity Sunday, after Matins at midnight, and Mass at one o'clock, after their thanksgiving and Crosses—the saying of five Paters, Aves and Glorias, with their arms held crosswise—and breakfast in the Refectory, 'we finished our little packets', and as soon as the city gates were opened the party, in full religious dress, of about forty nuns and lay sisters, two French priests and three Sisters to whom they had given refuge, and their own two Fathers, made their way to Aremburgh, and later Rotterdam and Delft, and arrived in England nearly two months later, after many discomforts and 'Calms, Storms and Contrary Winds'. George III did all he could to promote the homecoming of English religious, and had given private orders that church ornaments, vestments, and breviaries should pass freely through the Customs, though in the case of the nuns from Bruges, their pewter and some valuables

had been buried by their gardener in the garden at Prinsenhof, and have never been recovered. The community went first to Winchester, and then, in 1808, to the Convent of Our Lady of Doulours, Taunton: in all their wanderings and difficulties Thomas Weld of Lulworth, cousin of their Abbess when they left Belgium, was their greatest benefactor: also from this time, and at his suggestion, dates the colour of their habits—previously grey, they were dyed black as being less conspicuous in those troubled times. They hoped to remain permanently at Taunton, combining the contemplative life with that of teaching, but in recent years it became increasingly clear, with modern educational requirements, that that was impossible, so in December 1953 they sold the property to a specifically teaching Order—the Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy—and moved to Goodings, Woodland St. Mary, near Newbury.

Recently, at Prinsenhof, four lozenge-shaped stones of white marble on the enclosure wall of the convent have been cleaned, revealing four Stations of the Passion: 7. The Whipping at the Pilier and Croining with Thornes; 15. The Last Uncloathing on Mount Calvary; 16. The Nayling on the Cross; and 17. The Hanging on the Cross. They were obviously lettered by a Belgian stone-cutter, and at the base of each is cut 'Pray for Sister B.F.' She was almost certainly Bridget Dormer, who, at the age of sixteen, in 1643, was clothed at Nieuport on the same day as her sister Winifred, aged fifteen; their elder sister Frances was clothed the previous year at the age of seventeen. Their family was wealthy and devout, and had other members in the Community. It is probable she erected the Chapel of St. Saviour in the cloister garden, and the Stations, which from their numbers seem to be modelled on the famous Calvary of Romans, in Dauphiné, where the number of Stations varied at different times from nineteen in 1556 to thirty-seven in 1638.<sup>1</sup> She died in 1709, 'being fortified with Good works tho decrepitt by reason of her age', and was buried in her sister Frances' grave, 'under y<sup>e</sup> wall neare y<sup>e</sup> little Cellar window at y<sup>e</sup> vper end of our Cloister in Princenhoff'.

The convent buildings were sold by the French and partly destroyed, and for nearly a hundred years the remains of the palace were in private hands. The front court was taken into the town, and a block of small houses built, and when in 1888 the

<sup>1</sup> The 'Stations of the Cross' (II), by Herbert Thurston, S.J. *The Month*, August 1900, p. 164.

central buildings were bought from the van Caloen family by the Society of the Retreat of the Sacred Heart, the only ground left to them was a small square of garden. The French foundresses of the Community, Louise and Olympe de Montbault, steeped in the traditions of the pre-Revolutionary retreat houses of Brittany, opened their first house, under the Rule of St. Ignatius, at Boulogne, but the laws against congregations compelled them to move to Belgium, where the Prinsenhof is now the Mother House and Novitiate.

It seemed at first as if the foundation in Bruges was to be a failure as far as the essential work of the Society was concerned. Enclosed Retreats were unknown in Flanders, and thirteen years elapsed before permission to found them was obtained. The poverty of the house was extreme, and, in the first years, the work was carried on with the greatest difficulty. But it grew and prospered: in November 1893 the new large enclosure wing and chapel were added, to the east of the old fifteenth-century keep, and by 1913 it became necessary to further increase the accommodation. The building was hardly finished, when, in August 1914, came the declaration of war with Germany. In January 1915 a fire, caused, it is thought, by the fall of a chimney in a great gale, destroyed the high pitched roof and the fourth floor of the central building; a greater disaster was prevented by an Alsatian regiment, part of the occupation force, which came generously to the rescue, and extinguished the fire. In January 1917 the house, although in a dilapidated condition, was requisitioned by the military, the nuns expelled, and the room of Marie de Bourgogne became the office of a German 'Intendant'.

The Armistice was followed by a period of great prosperity. The large garden behind the convent proper was purchased, and some years later, the house next to the Retreat House. A narrow band of garden at the end of the original garden came into the market, and a large hall was built. The retreats reached the great number of over seventy a year, with an average of thirty retreatants in each group. It is a coincidence that Mère St. Benoit Labre, forty-one years Superior, and Superior General at Bruges, and to whom Prinsenhof owes its prosperity today, was also a Mary of Burgundy—her Christian name having been Mary, and her birthplace the old stone-built town of Dijon.

But once again the clouds of war gathered. The Community dispersed, leaving only a small group of Belgian nuns to guard the

house. This time there was no German occupation, but the central building was taken over by the municipality as offices.

Since 1945, much has been done to repair the ravages of time. The Prinsenhof of today, able to house over a hundred and fifty people, approaches in extent, if not in splendour, the domain over which Marie de Bourgogne held sway, and where something of her dignified, gracious spirit still lingers. Some of the present rooms keep their old places. The Retreat House and retreatants' chapel are to the west, on the site of the old chapel of St. Christopher, and the duke's private oratory. On the first floor of the central block is the room of Marie de Bourgogne, with its panelled plaster ceiling of shells and flowers set in circles and semicircles, and three long windows, looking out over the retreatants' garden, which in her time was *à la française*, set with cypresses and formal beds. A modern Gothic tower, to the west of the central block, gives character to the present building, approached by a narrow road up from the rue Nord du Sablon, where the old open-fronted galleries led, through the dappled shade of the Cour des Princes, to the peace that greets one as the convent door swings silently inwards.

They thought of how it had stood, and seen so many generations of men come and go; how often it had welcomed the new-born babe and given farewell to the old man: how many secrets of the past it knew; how many tales which men of the present had forgotten, but which yet mayhap men of times to come should learn of it; for to them yet living it had spoken time and again, and had told them what their fathers had not told them, and it held the memories of the generations . . . and their hopes for the days to be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The House of the Wolfings*, by William Morris.



# THE ORIGIN OF THE LATIN FEAST OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

By S. J. P. VAN DIJK

## II

THE year 1066 had hardly begun, when ill-omen arose over the whole of eastern and western Europe. For almost a fortnight during April, every evening there appeared the malignant and sinister comet, named later after Edmund Halley, its bloody rays foreboding evil and disaster: in Armenia an invasion of the Turks, in Russia internal strife and incursions by the barbarian Cumans, in Byzantium the death of the basileus, in England the conquest by William of Normandy.

According to William of Malmesbury, 'the zeal for letters and religion had grown cold many years before this event'. And since learning was conspicuous both in monasteries and cathedrals of the Norman Church, the invaders took the reorganization of the country in hand with a, for them, justified disdainful scorn. Church and State and, consequently, public worship saw important changes. Some only meant a set-back for the national character; others brought the end of it.

Lanfranc, William the Conqueror's great archbishop of Canterbury, was one of the most celebrated men of his day. A lawyer, theologian and administrator, he was also a first-rate liturgist of Norman stamp. As monastic life in his native country was almost everywhere based upon that of Cluny, Lanfranc believed in unity of worship as it had been realized in this variety of the Benedictine organization. His ideas are laid down in a set of monastic constitutions. Originally drawn up for his monks of Christ Church, their content was very general. And, since the Anglo-Saxon abbots of many houses were soon replaced



by Normans, the work became both norm and foundation-stone of a new, now Anglo-Norman, monastic life.

Lanfranc's Norman origin is especially evident in his reform of the Canterbury kalendar. Sharing the general suspicion of his countrymen<sup>1</sup> about the merits of the native English saints, Lanfranc suppressed a good number of local feasts. Whether this suspicion was only theological and hagiographical or perhaps also political—native saints easily become champions of nationalism—is difficult to establish. Yet there seems to be little doubt that the later Canterbury kalendar shows the disappearance of some Anglo-Saxon feasts and the introduction of others from the Continent. Among those that disappeared were the two new feasts of the Virgin: her Presentation and her Conception. Except perhaps for the case of St. Mary's, Worcester, mentioned in the first part of this paper, they no longer occur in the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century kalendars. Lanfranc's authority, readily accepted by his own countrymen, may well have been behind this state of affairs.

For about forty or fifty years there is no trace left of the feasts either in liturgical books or other historical documents. Though it is true that these documents are very scarce indeed, some confirmation may be obtained from the fact that, when the community of Christ Church, Canterbury, obtained permission from its archbishop St. Anselm (1093–1109) to celebrate the octave of the Nativity of Our Lady<sup>2</sup> and some other local feasts, there was no question of the Conception or the Presentation. Then suddenly, in the twenties, the feast of the Conception is again the object of attention in monastic circles; and, what is more, of discussion too.

1. The ancient Annals of Worcester cathedral record under 1125: 'The Conception of St. Mary is celebrated for the first time in England.'

2. The next year, those of Winchcombe state: 'This year the solemnity of the Conception of St. Mary began first to be celebrated among us.'

3. Among the events that happened during the abbacy of

<sup>1</sup> Another case has survived in the Chronicle of Abingdon, where abbot Athelhelm prohibited the commemorations of St. Ethelwold and St. Edward. E. Bishop's idea that this reform was also intended as an adaptation of the Winchester kalendar, in order to obtain a greater unity, based on the capital of the Conqueror's newly acquired kingdom, can no longer be defended.

<sup>2</sup> St. Anselm may have had a special devotion for this feast. He first arrived in this country on 8 September 1092.

William Godeman at St. Peter's, Gloucester (1113-31), the History of the house combines the Worcester and Winchcombe entries in this way: 'And about this time the solemnity of the Conception of blessed Mother Mary began to be celebrated among us in England.'

4. The St. Albans 'Acts of the Abbots' record that abbot Geoffrey (1119-46) ordered the feast to be celebrated 'in copes'; which means that it was among the feast days of the highest grade. The feast, in fact, occurs in the kalendars of a St. Albans breviary in the British Museum (Royal, 2.A.x) and of the Albani Psalter at Hildesheim, which is usually dated by art-historians as from 1125-35. However, it is still missing in the contemporary copy, prefixed to a non-liturgical St. Albans manuscript in the British Museum (Egerton, 3721).

5. Still more information has survived from the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds. The chartulary of the house contains a charter<sup>1</sup> in which abbot Anselm (1121-48) granted the abbey some of his property and a sum of money in order that:

(a) a daily Mass be celebrated in honour of the Virgin for the prosperity and the soul of king Henry I (*d.* 1135);

(b) the feasts of the Conception and of St. Saba be celebrated solemnly each year;<sup>2</sup>

(c) the community should observe the 'veneration' or feast (?) of Our Lady on the 8th day before Christmas.

6. Under the year 1129, one of the manuscripts of the Chronicle of John of Worcester, the Annals of Tewkesbury and the Stowe Chronicle mention that the feast of the Conception was confirmed by apostolic authority at the council of London, in the presence of king Henry I.

All these notes, however laconic and assured they seem to be, have, nevertheless, a complicated though rather blurred background. The wording of the first three items is so general that they cannot directly be connected with the history of the monasteries themselves. They should not be understood as though the feast was really observed either at Worcester, Winchcombe or Gloucester in the years 1125-6. At Winchcombe, for instance, it is to be found in a mid twelfth-century kalendar (B.M., Cotton, Tiberius E. v) but not in a contemporary breviary now at Valenciennes (bibl. mun.,

<sup>1</sup> D. C. Douglas, *Feudal documents from the abbey of Bury St. Edmund*, Oxford-London, 1932, 112 f., no. 112.

<sup>2</sup> The altar of St. Saba was consecrated some time before 1136; Williamson, 197.

116), which seems to indicate that, by that time, the feast was not yet really accepted in the house. In a positive sense, however, the three notes furnish information of two fundamental facts. First, the memory of a pre-Conquest or Anglo-Saxon feast of the Conception was utterly lost in the course of hardly two generations. This fact can be explained. In those early days, the feast had been confined to a few monasteries in the south of the country. The Normans, coming to England, treated native liturgical observances, insular saints and relics either with contempt, as products of ignorance and simplicity, or with suspicion as occasions for and incentives to political obstruction.<sup>1</sup> The silence imposed upon public veneration made the expression of private devotion in this point equally inadvisable. Abbot Elsin or someone else may, at first, have tried to overcome this Norman opposition to the feast of the Conception by the 'supernatural argument' of his vision; he and others must soon have experienced that the argument was just as much discarded as the devotion which it defended.

On the other hand, the Normans could not prevent fresh information of Greek customs reaching the country. Such men as Joseph, the monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, who, after 1089, returned from Constantinople with relics of St. Andrew for Rochester cathedral, kept the flame burning. This would rise at the first favourable occasion. And here we come to the second conclusion drawn from these notes. When this opportunity presented itself, the (re-)establishment of the feast necessarily raised a good deal of dust. Obviously, defenders and opponents turned up everywhere. Both their arguments 'pro' and 'con' are recorded—with the necessary anathemas—in the writings of those who favoured it. These discussions are ultimately the reason why the event drew the attention of, at least, three chroniclers, and why the beginnings of the Anglo-Norman feast are so totally different from those of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The place where the feast was first instituted has not been revealed; nor does the action of abbot Geoffrey at St. Albans provide any further clue to the origin and the development of the revival. With the name of Anselm of Bury St. Edmunds, however, we enter straight into the history of the case and meet with all the

<sup>1</sup> See also the interesting conversation between Eadmer and Osbern, both from Christ Church, Canterbury, when they discussed Lanfranc's order that the shrines and reliquaries of the cathedral should be investigated as to their authenticity; *Bosworth Psalter*, p. 64, note 2.

difficulties connected with it. The charter alone (no. 5) is a memorable monument to the outstanding devotion of Anselm the Younger. Son of Richezia, the sister of his great and saintly namesake, the archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm made his studies in monasteries at La Chiusa (near Turin), Lyons and Canterbury. After the death of his uncle in 1109, he returned to Italy. Within the next five years he became abbot of the ancient Greek monastery of St. Saba in Rome, which by that time had been occupied by Latin monks.<sup>1</sup> A friend of several popes, Anselm came again to England as papal legate. On that occasion his relations with king Henry were not exactly of the kind that inspire the foundation of a daily Mass for his spiritual and temporal prosperity. From the time, however, when Anselm became abbot at Bury and one of the most influential clerics of his day, their friendship was durable and, it will be seen presently, important for the spreading of the feast of Our Lady's Conception.

Anselm's grant in favour of the 'veneration' of 18 December, already mentioned in the first part of this paper,<sup>2</sup> adds another personal touch to the charter. Though this feast was foreign to the Roman tradition, Anselm must have known it. And one wonders whether abundance of heart inspired him to introduce into his new fatherland a devotion which he had learnt to appreciate during his younger days in northern Italy, where the feast was observed in the Ambrosian liturgy.

The abbot of Bury is undoubtedly the man who was responsible both for the revival and the spreading of the feast. Osbert of Clare, prior of Westminster 'in exile', expressed this in a letter to Anselm himself. The immediate purpose of his writing was twofold, viz. to advise the abbot to contact some influential and well-minded ecclesiastics to secure their collaboration in the defence of 'the cause of the blessed Virgin' and, secondly, to obtain some information about the existence of any Roman authority or tradition that could serve as another argument in favour of the feast. But the whole letter is embedded in two phrases. It opens with: 'You have spread the feast'; it closes with: 'Complete what you began'. Fortunately for us, Osbert could never bring himself to come straight to a point. With a strong dose of flourish and verbiage, he first reviews some detailed facts, explaining how he him-

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to observe how the abbacy of Anselm has never been mentioned in the discussions concerning the history of St. Saba's; see, for instance, L. Lestocquoy, 'Notes sur l'église de St. Saba', in *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, vi, 1929, 313 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Third Quarter, p. 262.

self became involved in the discussions around the feast, and why he needed the information requested.

After having recalled how, by Anselm's zeal, the feast is now observed 'in many places', Osbert comes to the difficulties he encountered. 'While we were keeping this distinguished festival in God's church, some followers of Satan said that it was ridiculous and up to now unheard-of during the centuries.' When they understood that Osbert could not be converted to their point of view, they approached two bishops, Roger of Salisbury and Bernard of St. Davids, 'who happened to be in the neighbourhood. And, having reported on the novelty of this festival, they excited their displeasure.' The bishops then 'saying that the festival was forbidden in the council<sup>1</sup> affirmed that this tradition should be stopped. Nevertheless, when the day of the Office came, we performed it with joyous solemnity.' Afterwards, however, those who bore a grudge against Osbert poured out their bile, insisting that the feast could not be kept, for its institution lacked authority of the Roman Church. But again Osbert refuted them, answering that many could testify 'how, in this kingdom and across the sea, a festive commemoration of the day had been instituted by some bishops and abbots in their respective churches'. Having related the theological arguments which he used in favour of the Virgin's sanctification, Osbert continues that Anselm should contact Gilbert the Universal, bishop of London, and Hugh, abbot of Reading, 'who keeps the feast also at the request of king Henry', lest Anselm should hear from his enemies: 'This man began to build but could not finish.'

This letter needs some explanation. First there is the date. Gilbert was consecrated bishop of London on 22 January 1128. Hugh, abbot of Reading, was elected archbishop of Rouen in the last days of 1129 or early in 1130. Osbert, therefore, must have written to his friend between January 1128 and January 1130, at the latest. This chronology is generally accepted: but no further attempt seems to have been made to limit this period. Yet an important point has been overlooked, possibly because of Osbert's involved style and manner of writing. In connection with the two bishops Roger and Bernard, it is said: *Qui hanc festivitatem prohibitam dicentes in concilio affirmaverunt* 'that this tradition must be abolished'. The accepted translation of this phrase is that given by E. Bishop,

<sup>1</sup> This phrase which is fundamental to the chronology admits various translations; see presently.

viz. 'The bishops declared that the festival was forbidden by a council and that the observance should be stopped.' Now this is hardly an obvious interpretation. Beginning with a simple but awkward question: where has the comma to be placed in the Latin sentence; after *dicentes* or after *concilio*? It is impossible to decide what Osbert himself would have done. Yet, whatever the case may be, the ambiguity of that comma permits three different interpretations. First, that proposed by Bishop, who brings in *concilio* together with *festivitatem prohibitam* into an accusative with infinitive, has been given above. To him *in concilio* (at a council) is identical with *a concilio* (by a council), while the insistence of the bishops that the feast should be stopped took place in the presence of Osbert's opponents. The first difficulty, however, is that the only council we know to have been interested in the feast did not forbid its celebration but confirmed it (see above, no. 6). The second is that Roger and Bernard could hardly have been approached by Osbert's adversaries between August 1127 and April-June 1129, when Bernard, in all probability, was in France.<sup>1</sup>

The two other explanations are grammatically more obvious and historically more in accordance with the facts already known. Placing the comma after *dicentes*, the phrase can be translated thus: 'Saying (to Osbert's opponents) that the feast was forbidden, they affirmed (later) at the council that the tradition should be abolished.' With the comma after *concilio*, it runs in this way: 'Saying at the council that the feast was prohibited, they (also) affirmed (on that occasion) that the custom should be discontinued.' The difference between the two translations is of no consequence for the present discussion. The main point is that in either case the two bishops were actually present at a council, where the matter was discussed. And the council we know to have treated the question is that held in London, probably from 30 September to 19 October 1129.

Seen in this light, Osbert's letter must have been written after the council of London. The two bishops, who by and large spent most of their lives in attendance on the king,<sup>2</sup> were in London at least from 1 August. The sequel of events may then be reconstructed as follows:

Anselm's coming to England in 1120 or 1121 and his election

<sup>1</sup> See W. Farrer, 'An Outline Itinerary of King Henry the First' in *English Historical Review*, xxxiv, 1919, nos. 563, 573, 586-7.

<sup>2</sup> See Farrer, loc. cit., *passim*. The evidence here given can be augmented with that from other sources.



as abbot of Bury is the starting point of the Anglo-Norman feast of the Conception. Since he was absent from this country at least for some time during 1123, for a journey to Rome, it was only about 1125-6 that the spreading of the feast attracted attention and criticism (nos. 1-3). Osbert of Clare, who had become a fervent defender of the feast during his stay at Bury and because of his friendship with the abbot, got himself into trouble after the celebration of December 1128. The house where he then lived was, as far as evidence goes, not Westminster, but certainly in the neighbourhood of London. After their squabbles with Osbert about the ridiculous novelty which had neither tradition nor authority, his adversaries promptly denounced Osbert to the bishops Roger and Bernard. This happened in London during the summer of 1129. Seeing that the feast was spreading rapidly since 1125 and the whole affair was getting out of hand, the bishops took upon them to raise the question at the council, fixed for Michaelmas of that same year. The feast, in fact, was discussed in the presence of the papal legate John of Crema and king Henry I. But the result of the discussion was not exactly what Osbert's opponents or, for that matter, the two bishops had wished for or expected. Instead of being dispraised or condemned, the feast was approved 'by papal authority', which means: the papal legate declared that there were no serious objections against it. It is this decision that is recorded in the annals of Worcester and Tewkesbury (no. 6).

The outcome of the council is rather unexpected after the reading of Osbert's account of the events leading up to it. And, judging from the letter, the writer did not think that this result was due to Anselm's presence and pleading on that occasion. Someone, however, must have done so in his place. This surely was the king. Henry I was a practical rather than an intellectual man; it has long been established that his name 'Beauclerk' was a fourteenth-century invention. Whether he followed the advice of his friend Anselm or his personal feelings of friendship, whether it was genuine devotion or opportunism, Henry's active part in the case can no longer be denied. Anselm's charter contains provisions for the prosperity of the king. The daily Mass to be celebrated for that purpose is a votive Mass of Our Lady. In this choice the king's wish, pleasure or approval must have been sought.

Osbert too reveals an interesting side of the king's attitude. Advising Anselm to confer with Hugh of Reading, he mentions that the latter keeps the feast with great solemnity, at the request

also of the king. Now Henry's predilection for Reading is well known. William of Malmesbury even tells us that it was the only monastery on this side of the Channel in which he was really interested. This interest was partly due to Henry's devotion to Cluny. Reading was founded from the Cluniac priory of Lewes, which also provided much of its population and, for a long time, its abbots. The monks followed the monastic observances of Cluny, even though the house as such was independent. Devotion to the Virgin had been long since a characteristic of the Congregation; the Cluniacs contributed considerably to the revival of Marian thought. Yet, the feast of the Conception did not figure in their kalendar. As for abbot Hugh's writings, they do not show any personal enthusiasm for the mystery of the Conception. The one instance that bears on the subject is hardly worth mentioning.<sup>1</sup> In short, something special had to happen during Hugh's abbacy before a feast of the Conception could be established in this milieu. This was clearly the intervention of king Henry. He may have thought it proper that the feast should be instituted in the monastery which was so closely connected with his name. Both the attitude of the king and the outcome of the council must have been an inspiration for many and an eye-opener to others. But from Osbert himself we also hear that the criticism was not so easily silenced as all that. In fact, the trouble was only beginning.

As for Hugh's seeming apathy, it may be asked whether Osbert really hit the mark in suggesting a more personal contact of Anselm with him and with Gilbert, bishop of London. As far as Hugh is concerned, the question is of little consequence. Shortly after the council, he was elected archbishop of Rouen. Any further assistance on his part was not to be expected on this side of the Channel. Yet, if Osbert's assertion that neither of these two shrank from taking up the cause of the blessed Virgin is exact, it is curious that no evidence survives of her feast being introduced at such an early date at Rouen. As for the bishop of London, he received his early education at Lyons where the feast was first celebrated perhaps in the thirties, when St. Bernard made trouble by disturbing

<sup>1</sup> It is a letter of Hugh, as abbot of Reading, to Matthew of Albano; PL 192, 1152. It should be remembered, however, that the addressee was an influential person, a friend of St. Bernard (who was strongly opposed to the feast) and a man averse to the innovations which then were being brought into the monastic life of northern France. Hugh may have been careful not to mention any 'shocking' novel ideas about the doctrine and feast of the Conception.

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the serenity of the simple-minded. But it is hardly possible to see any real connexion between these two facts.

After all this, it should not be forgotten that Osbert's letter also leaves questions unanswered. For instance: On what grounds did the bishops Roger and Bernard maintain in the council of 1129 that the feast was 'forbidden'? How could Osbert say that, because of Anselm's propaganda, the feast was observed 'in many places', while in arguing with his adversaries he states that both here and across the sea 'some' bishops and abbots had introduced it? From the Continent no such evidence is available.

Osbert wrote still another letter in connexion with the feast. It was addressed to Warin, dean of Worcester, and accompanied a sermon, written at his request, 'to excite in the minds of the listeners a greater joy in the celebration'. From this it may be concluded that the feast was already instituted at Worcester when Osbert wrote. For several reasons, which cannot be explained here, the conversation and correspondence previous to the drawing up of the sermon seem to date from 1137. The sermon itself, however, and the accompanying letter cannot be dated with more accuracy.

The differences in tone and content between the letter to Anselm and that to Warin are remarkable. In one way or another the discussions before and after the council had influenced if not Osbert's enthusiasm, at least his policy. In the letter to Anselm he freely explains the arguments used against his opponents. And these, in fact, go far beyond the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon and Greek tradition of the feast. In one place he states his belief in the possibility that God sanctified the blessed Virgin Mary at the conception itself without the contagion of sin. In the letter to Warin, however, he confesses that he does not dare to say what he really thinks of the Virgin's conception. And the reason he gives is that one should not throw these heavenly pearls among the masses, which, even in the brightness of the sun, usually adhere to the greater darkness of error.

Osbert is no longer the man who speaks freely, as he did before his opponents in 1129. In those days the debate was about the history, tradition, authority and liturgical law of a new feast. Now he is aware of grave theological problems that have come to light in the meantime. Experience has taught him also that those who were against the feast had not always a clear notion of what they were fighting. Some of them failed to see the fundamental difference

between the (ancient) liturgical tradition and the recent theology behind it. This unexpected complication is most lucidly explained in his letter to Warin. Just before the final passage, Osbert exclaims: 'Therefore, let those infidels and heretics stop all their idle talking about this sacred solemnity and let them learn that the children of the Mother of Grace make no celebration of a sinful act but of the beginning of our salvation.' So the outcry among those lettered Normans was caused by the term 'conception', a word with many and doubtful meanings and almost a scandal in itself. What can there be saintly and honourable in a conception, they reasoned. The generating act of parents hardly escapes sinfulness and brings in its trail original sin too! No matter how much the defenders insisted that their cult was not concerned with what the others concocted in their learned conclusions, but with the simple joy of honouring Mary, the child of a miracle that announced the greatest miracle of all times, i.e. the redemption, it was no good. The battle was on; the limits between liturgy and divinity were fading away.

In these circumstances, Osbert was afraid to add to the confusion by a sermon which, just because of its purpose, could not deal with the theological aspect without misleading the simple-minded. Maybe he did not feel himself a match for those who were trying hard to disqualify the feast on theological grounds, even though he knew that their arguments were beside the point. How greatly must he have enjoyed the moment when he heard that someone else had thrown himself into the field with greater success than he could have hoped for himself. The treatise 'On the Conception of St. Mary' by the great historian Eadmer, monk and precentor of Christ Church, Canterbury, must have made a lasting impression on all who were able to get hold of a copy. Its clarity and manly devotion which still shine from this little booklet made it both a treasure and a deadly weapon. It is not the place here to enter into the force of his subtle defence of the Immaculate Conception. But even his few lines on the debate of the feast itself are historically of fundamental importance.

'In my wish to reflect upon the principle from which the salvation of the world proceeded, today's solemnity came to my mind, by which, in many places, the conception of blessed Mary, the Mother of God, is joyously commemorated. And in former days, indeed, it was more frequently celebrated, chiefly by those in whom there dwelt a pure simplicity of mind and a more humble

devotion to God. But where both greater learning and preoccupation with research into the nature of things exalted the minds of some, they did away with this solemnity, contemptuous of the simplicity of the poor in spirit, and banished it utterly as lacking reason. And their judgment came to such power, especially because those who gave it were prominent by secular and ecclesiastical authority as well as by great wealth. But when I ruminated both upon the simplemindedness of the men of earlier days and the eminent genius of the moderns, a few words of Divine Scripture occurred to me which should be considered . . . namely that the simple converse with God.'

The clarity of these introductory words to Eadmer's treatise leaves nothing much to be desired. The feast is celebrated in many places. The same statement was made by Osbert of Clare in his letter to abbot Anselm. The only difference is that the latter may have slightly exaggerated in order to please his friend. Eadmer, however, does not address anybody in particular and, therefore, can be accepted more readily. In former days (*priscis temporibus*), Eadmer continues, the feast was still more widely observed. For serious damage had been done by some learned people, who did away with it, since, in their opinion, the feast was meaningless. The reason why they thought so is also recorded by Eadmer, when further on he refutes their argument, viz. that the generally accepted feast of the Nativity of the Virgin does full honour to her beginnings. 'For she would not have been born, if she were not conceived.' Finally, those who argued in this manner had imposed their way of thinking upon others by their authority in Church and State and by their money.

On the basis of a seemingly probable chronology of Eadmer's historical works, the author's death is generally placed in 1124. Therefore, the facts mentioned in his treatise 'On the Conception' are supposed to have happened before that date, and, conformably, are explained in the following manner. The former days of simplemindedness refer to the Anglo-Saxon period. But when, after the Conquest, Norman scholarship prevailed, the solemnity was abolished. Among those who were pre-eminent in Church and State was archbishop Lanfranc, whose authority and constitutions caused the feast to disappear completely. This explanation, however, was construed before a more detailed knowledge of Osbert's letters has been acquired. It does not fit in with the plain facts known from elsewhere and is now untenable.

If Eadmer had written his treatise before 1124, he could not have stated that the festival was observed 'in many places'. It was simply unknown then. Anselm had only come to this country a few years before, and had since been away at least once on a journey to Rome. The chronicles, in fact, record that the feast was first instituted about 1125-6. Moreover, Eadmer speaks of the opponents of the feast as 'moderni'. Although their agitation belonged to the past, when he wrote his treatise (*in robur excrevit, sententiam . . . protulerunt, auctoritate . . . abundantia pre-eminebant*), yet they were his contemporaries. Eadmer could not have used the word 'moderni' for personages who lived some 40 or 50 years before. Nor could he possibly have found evidence that in Anglo-Saxon times the feast was observed 'in many places'. Moreover, Eadmer's favourable judgement of Lanfranc, as given in his *Historia novorum*, hardly agrees with the sharp but fine criticism in his treatise 'On the Conception'. Finally, had this booklet been written before 1124, Osbert of Clare would have known and used it during the discussions before and after the council of London, and these would have developed differently.

In other words, if the treatise is by Eadmer—and this can hardly be doubted—the author was still alive when Osbert got into trouble, viz. after the council of London. In fact, it is not difficult to see to whom Eadmer refers. He brands the activity of the two bishops Roger and Bernard with their followers, who had done everything to make up for their defeat of 1129. Especially Roger of Salisbury answers the accurate sketch. He dominated both the ecclesiastical and political scene from 1107 onwards. He was something of a twelfth-century Richelieu and was the type of secular prelate who combined the office of chief justiciar with that of bishop. While following the king's court, he still had enough time, interest and money left to make some of his churches into castles of fame. The strongly fortified site of old Sarum cathedral was so beautiful that 'it yields to none in England'. Neither bishop Roger nor Bernard seems to have been interested in doctrinal problems. This does not mean, however, that they may not have had some fancy or idea which they really did not grasp.

Thus Eadmer wrote after 1129, and refers to the partisans of the same personages mentioned by Osbert. The death of king Henry brought trouble to bishop Roger. And it is not unlikely that the fall of this prelate was the end also of the agitation against the feast of the Conception. One wonders whether Eadmer took this



opportunity by defending so frankly again the cause of the Virgin. In that case, he must have written between 1135 and 1139. It would explain, at least, why he wrote about the 'moderni' in the past tense.

As far as the available evidence goes, Eadmer's treatise 'On the Conception' coincides with the end of the controversy of the Anglo-Norman feast. After ten years, the battle was won by the defenders. It is tempting, but probably incorrect, to suppose that Eadmer struck the final blow. Victory came by the natural death of the opposition rather than by force of arguments. Nevertheless, though feelings against the feast may have died down for lack of authoritative, financial and perhaps political support, though the number of kalendars and liturgical texts slowly increased from the second quarter of the twelfth century—even from a merely historical point of view, i.e. as distinct from the liturgical, it would be worth while to trace the exact routes along which the feast spread over these isles—a certain uneasiness remained for a long time, especially in secular churches. And even as late as 1228, when the patriarch of Armenia visited St. Albans, Matthew of Paris' confrères could not refrain from asking him whether a feast of the Conception was really celebrated in his church. This uncertainty in the pure and simple devotion was, of course, maintained by the discussions, by then already scholastic, that were going on on both sides of the Channel. For if Eadmer's treatise may mark the end of the purely English controversy on the subject, it was also the beginning of the full-scale theological dispute about the doctrine of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception, a discussion which became acute with the uncalled-for intervention of St. Bernard. It is for this reason that the treatise of Nicholas of St. Albans, entitled 'On the celebration of the Conception . . . against Bd. Bernard', and written some forty or fifty years after Eadmer's defence, really is no longer concerned with the traditional feast but with the new theology behind it. Even in this field English learning contributed the greatest champions of Our Lady. However, this was not before they could freely draw inspiration from what should be regarded as a most typical aspect of late mediaeval English piety: the devotion to the Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary.

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# LETTERS OF PHILLIPPS DE LISLE TO MONTALEMBERT

(continued)

By LOUIS ALLEN

(Montalembert notes:

Très intéressant sur  
les causes et la durée  
de l'esprit du moyen âge  
en Angleterre)

Grace Dieu Manor

June 5. 1852

My very dear Friend and Brother,

It seems quite an age since we had any communications with each other by Letter, and I moreover owe you my thanks for your kind remembrances in sending me a copy of your admirable address to the *Académie*.<sup>1</sup> Like everything of your's it is noble and beautiful and I felt the deepest sympathy for every word of it. I have also to congratulate you on your Letter to the Abbé Gaume on his "Ver Rongeur"—I have just been translating it for the Catholic Standard, from the copy published in the Université Catholique for December last. I have also appended to your Letter one from Donoso Cortéz and one from the Cardinal Archbishop of Rheims. I felt very anxious that some of our *very dull and routine* English Catholics, especially of the *Oratorian Species*, should see what the Leaders of the Catholic Church on the Continent think on these matters. I can assure you, my dear Friend, that while the Principles which you and I have all our lives been upholding, are every day triumphing in France, and in England too amongst the Anglicans, amongst our English Catholics they are quite at a discount, I might almost say *in disgrace*. For strange to say, through the perverse line which some of the PARSON CONVERTS (men of no Family, with no old Chivalrous recollections attached to their names, and no noble or medieval associations) have taken, we upholders of the glorious principles of Christian Art have a very difficult part to play—and what with poor Pugin's terrible affliction (for you have doubtless heard that it has pleased God to deprive him of his reason)<sup>2</sup> which is a real national, if I ought not rather to say *European*, misfortune, and the fact that most of the English Catholics are very much in the rear of the Great Christian Renaissance of the present day, I can tell you that I

<sup>1</sup> *Discours de Réception à l'Académie Française*, 5 February 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Pugin was removed to Bedlam in 1852, and died in the same year.

for one have a hard battle to fight. It was in England as you know that we first revived the grand old medieval Chasuble, and now I am told that some of your Bishops are introducing it in France, but alas! in London the Catholics are taking up the idea that the only orthodox thing is the hideous Roman Chasuble with its unmeaning straight single aumphrey<sup>1</sup> down the back. It was the Oratorians who commenced this frightful fashion, and it has been taken up by others. However the movement in France will help us greatly, especially as the generality of our Bishops are in favour of the grand old medieval vestment. I hope for one later to do more to advance the great cause of Christian Art in England, if I ever live to succeed to my Patrimonial Estates, but meanwhile I can assure you I am far from idle, and as long as God gives me life and health I am determined to go on contending for our glorious principles.

And now my dear Brother are you coming to pay England a visit? a rumour to this effect is in circulation. I trust if this should be true that you will not disappoint and grieve me by not just running down to Grace Dieu—Remember that 4 hours suffice to land you from London at our *Coalville Station*, which is only 3 miles from Grace Dieu. Remember too that I have an immense deal to shew you that would really interest you, all which has sprung up since your last visit—we would go over to *Alton*<sup>2</sup> together and see Cheadle, and the New Cathedral at Nottingham, and a host of other interesting things in Staffordshire, the admirable manufactory of Stained Glass, which really equals what the medieval men did: Poor Pugin's last atchievement before his sad illness. I hope my dearest Friend, for the sake of our friendship of so many years standing, that you will not deprive me of the consolation of seeing you. We had a very interesting visit from Father Lacordaire this spring, and though I was quite charmed with his conversation I regretted to find him much less *medieval* than I had expected. And I did not like what he said about the Pagan Classics and Abbé Gaume. And now one word on that said *Ver Rongeur* and your Letter upon it in the *Université Catholique*. You ask the Abbé Gaume to account for the fact of England entertaining such a high esteem for the Pagan Classics, and being at the same time the Land in which Christian Medieval Principles prevail more than in any other—Shall I tell you my own notions in regard to this fact?—in so far as it is a fact, I attribute it to the great part which Biblical Studies play in English Education. The more you examine Christian medieval principles the more you will find them to be Biblical Principles, that is the principles laid down in God's written word, the Bible—and in proportion as men are saturated with a knowledge of the Bible (however imperfect their understanding of it's more abstruse parts may be, which of course is very imperfect in the case of Protestants), the more will you find such men imbued with ideas and feelings the reverse of what would result from the study of Pagan Literature. Now in all English schools since the pretended Reformation the Bible has been immensely studied, and though since

<sup>1</sup> A diagrammatic illustration figures here in the MS.

<sup>2</sup> The seat of Lord Shrewsbury.

the 16th Century the Pagan Classics have been held amongst Englishmen in the same honour as in the rest of Europe, I hardly agree with you in saying *in more honour*, yet from the prevalence of Biblical knowledge and Biblical reading, in the midst of the evil of a heterodox interpretation the mind of youth certainly had a great safeguard against being carried away in the torrent of Pagan ideas, which were certainly counteracted by this frequent study of holy Scripture—take for example our Universities of Oxford and Cambridge: every Student is obliged to attend the public service in Chapel once if not twice in the same Day. He there hears read two Chapters of the Bible one from the Old the other from the New Testament. It is the same at Eton and the other great Public Schools—And it is a fact that the Protestant mind is saturated (so to say) with the Bible to a degree that Catholics & Continental Catholics especially have very little idea of. It is to this that I attribute the fact that Infidelity has made so little progress in England. Then again it must be acknowledged that of late years here in England as with you in France people have begun to see the absurdity of giving such a prominence to the old Pagan Literature, the late Dr Arnold was an instance of this, and he introduced a considerable modification into the Studies in his own School that of Rugby. And ever since the great medieval movement began in 1833 the feeling in reference to the Evil of this predominance of Pagan Literature in our Education has been growing more and more. And all persons who have been awakened to this idea see clearly enough that whatever of Christian feeling and principle we have in England it all exists in spite of our educational system so far as the Predominance of Paganism is concerned at least, and is the result of other causes all of them of a totally opposite nature. If you go back in our history to the time of Charles 2, and of Queen Anne, you will find that Pagan ideas were far more rife in England then than now, and the Architecture of those times and the decoration of houses and gardens prove what I say: but when Paganism had played such fantastic or rather awful tricks before high heaven on the grand Stage of France towards the close of the last Century, men in England who thought at all were sickened, and turned their eyes to the old Gothic Churches and Castles of their Ancestors—so that the 19th Century no sooner dawned in England, than a love of old medieval ideas revived amongst us—take 2 examples in my own County—your own relative the late Marquis of Hastings<sup>1</sup> built a Gothic Castle at Donnington in 1802 and the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Leicester the Duke of Rutland<sup>2</sup> did the same at Belvoir in still purer style about 1815. From this moment you know well enough how rapidly this feeling has been gaining ground, so that our England of 1852 presents a very different aspect to a foreigner from what the same country would have done in 1780 or still more in 1688. Then again it must be confessed that we owe an immense debt to our really Christian Constitution, of which we must never forget that it was in all it's essential features and in all its good qualities the work of the Middle Ages, and

<sup>1</sup> Francis Rawdon Hastings, 1st Marquis of Hastings (1754-1826).

<sup>2</sup> John Henry, 5th Duke of Rutland (1777-1857).

that it's continued existence since the Protestant Reformation is certainly not owing to our study of Pagan Literature, but in spite of it. But perhaps no cause has contributed more powerfully to the preservation of a certain medieval Religious Spirit in this Country, than the fact of our Landed Aristocracy (not only the Peers but our great old families of what we call *the Gentry*, whom the Law of England recognizes as *noble*) having in England alone amongst all the countries of Europe preserved their medieval privileges and vast estates—owing to this circumstance they have been obliged as it were to reside on their estates the greater part of the year, which has been a means of preserving them from many of the vices, and the consequent degeneracy, that degraded the same class in Italy and Spain, and more or less even in your own France. In fine it seems to me very clear as you say, that Education, though a most important element, is not completely *all in all*, as some make it out to be. For certainly in spite of a bad system of education, a large amount of Christian feeling & spirit has been preserved in England: at the same time the influence of education is very great, and all that we have of evil in England is mainly to be attributed to it—I remember well as a Boy at School (an *Anglican* School for as you know I was then an Anglican) what mischief we derived from our Pagan Classics, what miserable curiosity was excited in our minds, how our sense of high Xtian Morals was weakened by reading of the crimes of the Gods and Goddesses and Heroes, how it familiarized us, young as we were, with all that the Law of Jesus Christ and His blessed Gospel forbids and condemns. How it created two worlds as it were around us, the world of imagination altogether impure and bad, and the world of reality and matter of fact, which though it acknowledged a better and a holier Law, appeared prosaick and disgusting by the side of the other. Oh! if our minds had been filled with the romance and poetic loveliness that one finds in true Xtian History and the Lives of the Saints, such as your immortal work on St Elizabeth so sublimely sets before us, if we had been taught to contemplate virtuous Love, holy Beauty, Saintly Courage, Grandeur and magnificence hallowed by Religion, the World of imagination and that of Reality would have been but one and the same bright world: the inheritance of all who lived in God's grace and favour, and sin and evil, disobedience and misery would have been seen indissolubly united together—Till we reform the Education of Europe we can never hope to make men what we ought to make them, Christians in very deed, and not in name only—And till we make the baptized Nations, what their Baptism requires them to be, how can we expect God to bless or to prosper them? on the contrary God will punish them and cast them down: yes and it is well He should do so for if it were not for this warning to what a pitch of corruption and degradation would they not arrive! But I am afraid I shall tire you with such a long Letter.

I trust the Countess de Montalembert is quite well, and your little Girls—as for me, only think, we have now eleven children, and I wish you could see them, some of the girls are very beautiful, though it is hardly right for *me* to say so—



Our Bishop is now staying with us,<sup>1</sup> he came to confirm my second daughter Alice, who is so called after the famous Lady Alice Lisle, my *great great great* grandmother, who was so infamously beheaded by order of James 2nd and whose picture has been ordered to be painted in the New Palace of Westminster, as that of one of the most interesting Personages in English History and in the developement of our glorious Constitution. Now let me say one word on another subject. I am so glad you uphold Louis Napoleon.<sup>2</sup> Do you know I am enthusiastically for him, as most English *Conservatives* are—I regard him as the deliverer of Europe. I only hope you will make him Emperor, and make the title hereditary. You will never be settled in France till you do this. Of course I should have preferred Henri 5,<sup>3</sup> if he had been possible, but he is evidently *impossible* and *incapable*.

What a glorious Man you are, my dearest Friend, I look upon you as the real Saviour of France and Europe. I hope you will keep on good terms with Louis Napoleon, for I am tired of Changes, Europe needs repose.

In England just now we are in a very sorry state, not as to our political state, but we are devoured with religious bigotry—and our Catholics are sadly divided, and the imprudence of some of the Converts in using language unnecessarily harsh and insulting towards Protestants, especially in such publications as the *Tablet*, the *Rambler*, &c—has tended to throw back the movement, which was silently drawing men on to the Church. My Wife desires to be most kindly remembered to you, and I am ever, my dearest Friend and Brother,

most affectionately your's

Ambrose Lisle Phillipps

In November 1852 Phillipps brought two of his sons, Ambrose Charles and Everard, to Paris to complete their studies, the latter to take a course in Hindustani under the orientalist Garcin de Tassy before entering the Indian Army. Montalembert was away from Paris, but entertained the two boys on his return and wrote of them to their father: 'They are really most agreeable and accomplished youths and you may easily imagine with what interest and heartfelt gratification I behold those two little boys whom I so well remember bearing the cross and incense at mass in Grace-Dieu Chapel in 1839, grown up to be such fine and noble intelligent youths. They are great favourites with my wife and daughters.' In the same letter he attacked Louis-Napoleon

<sup>1</sup> William Joseph Hendren, O.S.F., formerly Bishop of Clifton, at this time Bishop of Nottingham.

<sup>2</sup> Montalembert's support for Louis-Napoléon as the only alternative to socialism, made explicit in a letter to the *Univers* (12 December 1851) was withdrawn on the expropriation of the exiled House of Orléans (22 January 1852). Phillipps is no doubt referring here to the *Univers* letter, which had appeared in *The Times* in translation. This letter was for Montalembert, says Mrs. Oliphant (op. cit., II, 224) 'the great mistake of his life'.

<sup>3</sup> The Comte de Chambord (1820-83).

and the baneful influence of the *Univers* among the French clergy : ' . . . we see the mass of the clergy borne away by the torrent of servile adhesion to the *droit des plus forts*, which has been pouring forth day after day by our only daily paper' (Purcell, II, pp. 248-50). Phillipps replied over a year later, by which time the question of the Emperor's relations with his Catholic subjects had become complicated by the Crimean War.

(Montalembert notes :  
très intéressante et utile)

Grace Dieu Manor  
Feast of the dear St Elizabeth  
Nov. 19. 1853.

My very dear Friend and Brother,

On what day could I more properly answer your last most precious and valued Letter, than on the Feast of that great Saint, whose name will always be associated with your own and with the greatest efforts of your wonderful genius and eloquence, while it has been from the first the link that knit us together and that placed my services to the Catholic cause beneath the protecting shadow of your great exploits and of your universal reputation? This morning we sang Mass in a Chapel dedicated to St Elizabeth, designed by that great restorer of Xtian Architecture poor Pugin whose loss we all deplore, and appended to the Chapel which you remember at Grace Dieu, but which has been since much enlarged. How many thoughts crowded on my mind, as we sang those old Gregorian melodies, that of you was not absent! How many storms and dark clouds have passed over both of us, since those sunny days of our youth, when we first met and promised our mutual friendship to each other! How many friends have passed away to another Life, how many changes have come over the whole face of Xtendom, so that we hardly recognise a trace of what then was: but at least one thing has not changed, my affection my admiration and my veneration for you and all that you do—And when in the very matter, you so beautifully write about in your last Letter, it is not on principle that we differ, if we even differ (which I doubt) upon any questions of detail. You will remember when we were wandering together at Rievaulx and Fountains, I told you that what I longed to see was an Emperor of the West, who should stand in the Place of Charlemagne and who should come forth as the unflinching upholder of Order and the Church, and that that was what the 19th Century needed: such a *Monarcha Fortis* as the venerable Holtzhauser<sup>1</sup> dreamed of in his

<sup>1</sup> Bartholomew Holzhauser (1613-58), Bavarian priest and writer, founder of the United Brethren, and author of a commentary on the Apocalypse in which he says that the seven stars and seven candlesticks of St. John are paralleled by seven periods of Christian history, of which the last three are a period of suffering which would last until a powerful monarch should arise to re-establish Christendom and reign over East and West, a period of consolation from then until the appearance of Antichrist, and lastly one of desolation from Antichrist to the end of the world. This prophecy, together with accounts of Holzhauser's visions, was published in Latin during the eighteenth century and later translated into French and German. Interpretations of these prophecies were very much in vogue at the time of the Bourbon Restoration.

apocalyptic musings, a rallying point for the good, a terror for the evil doer: a man who would know how to wield the sword of the Lord, how to re-establish that order of the West, out of which alone healthy Liberty might gradually spring forth, the Liberty of a Xtian State of Society, not the Liberty of modern Parliaments, reviving the remembrances of St Louis and St Edward, *effacing* the recollections of 1688 and the execrable Dutch usurpation. Has God looked in mercy upon, has He heard His Church's cry, has He raised up a new Charlemagne, or are we come to the Augustulus of Xtendom? Is there a new and bright era dawning forth, or is it the last bright flash of twilight before a night of Chaos and final destruction? Who will answer these questions? I dare not, though I oscillate between hope and fear, and feel like a man that plucks up his courage in the midst of uncertain rumours of trifling successes, in the assurance that at least it is generous to believe that all is not lost. Time will tell us the rest.

Meanwhile I cannot say that I sympathize either with the Policy of France or of England on the Eastern Question. I firmly believe that right is on the side of the Russian Emperor and the Eastern Church, and that the alliance of the Westerns with the Sultan is thoroughly Antichristian and abominable before God and His Saints. That we should have a right to restrain the territorial aggrandizement of Russia, by the eventual restoration of the independent Greek Empire, is quite another matter, and by me fully admitted: but to uphold Islamism at the expense of our Brethren of the Eastern Churches, whether in Unity or in Schism, is to my mind a damnable sin, fraught with malediction for Xtendom, and charged with vengeance for the worn out nations of South Western Europe. In saying this I know that I do but express the feeling of my Lineal ancestor Sir John de Lisle, who headed the crusading Fleet of England as Lord High Admiral, and who was one of the 12 first Knights of the Garter and now lies entombed at Windsor. That great and good Knight had little sympathy with the Latin usurpation at Constantinople, and he never dreamed of rearing order upon usurpation, or of fraternizing with Mussulmen against the venerable old Patriarchates of the East. England, like France has undoubtedly temporal interests to uphold, that cannot fail to make her justly jealous of Russian aggrandizement, but woe to her if in upholding them, She make common cause with the accursed Kingdom of Mahomet! Such a Policy however is but the climax of the Renaissance and the legitimate development of the doctrines of Macchiavelli. That infidel Statesmen should follow such a course is not surprising, but that it should be applauded by Bishops and Priests, who are the divinely commissioned *Keepers*, and ought to be the *Interpreters*, of the *Prophecies of God* is truly wonderful.<sup>1</sup> In this too Time will teach us a lesson.

<sup>1</sup> Wishing to reassert French influence in the administration of the Holy Places and to resist the encroachments of the Greek Orthodox clergy, the French hierarchy had supported Napoleon III against the Russians, and ordered prayers to be said for the success of the expedition to the Crimea. Fortoul, Minister of Religions, wrote to the Archbishop of Aix: 'Cet élan spontané des prélats qui, au nord comme au midi, à

But it has been long since a Catholic could look with any satisfaction on the Political face of Europe, so let us turn to what now constitutes but a *remnant* in the midst of Nations once Christian but now half-heathen and Apostate from all the Principles of Christianity. When we look at this remnant we must surely rejoice to witness it's gradual revival, and how it is once more preparing for the fulfilment of some new Destiny, one greater, I firmly believe, than any that has yet been fulfilled by the Church of God. Here in England Catholicity is decidedly spreading and becoming stronger, notwithstanding many drawbacks and many deplorable mistakes. Amongst the latter I should emphatically place the particular line taken by the later Converts and especially the Oratorians, their lamentable warfare with all the old Catholic Traditions of this Country upon a shallow and exaggerated theory of antinationalism in Religion. The growth of a Catholicism in the midst of a great people as it has shewn itself for more than 1000 years is surely no more to be disregarded or contemned, than the natural qualities and aptitudes of it's physical climate and atmosphere, and to plant in England the Italian Peculiarities of Catholicism (however respectable in their own place) is like planting the delicate sapplings of the Tropicks in our own colder and more misty region. If the English mind is to be recalled to the love of Catholicism it must be by shewing that our Divine Religion is what it was when England was one in Faith and the devoted daughter of the *Apostolic See*. I say the *Apostolic See*, for those words always convey to my mind I know not what of a different idea from what is conveyed by the word 'Rome'. Which latter somehow or other I associate with the idea of assassins armed with Stiletos, with revolutionists rising against their sovereign, infidels driving away the successor of St Peter, Monsignori's and Abbati's in an unclerical looking SHABBY GENTEEL sort of dress, Church Offices abandoned or hurried over, theatrical music turning out the melodies of St Gregory in disgrace, the anatomical displays of Michael Angelo and a hundred other Painter's in their disgusting delineations of forbidden unseemliness substituted for the pure and holy art of Angelico and the Christian School, and last but not least the resolute determination of the upholders of these degradations to force the same on all Catholics, wherever they may be, and so stifle at once any aspirations after past glories and bygone sanctities. All this rushes to my mind when I pronounce the word 'Rome', but thank God the black vision departs when I think of the *Apostolic See*. That I love the other I hate: for most truly are these two now divorced, I believe never again to be reunited. There has been lately an attempt on the part of the Roman Monsignori's to crush our Gothic Vestments in England. We trust it will fail, for it is stoutly opposed by our Bishops, but the issue is still

l'ouest comme à l'est, invitent les fidèles avec une touchante unanimité de langage à prier pour le succès d'une expédition nécessaire, à écarter les inquiétudes que pouvaient faire naître les éventualités de la guerre, à rappeler au peuple que la main de Dieu ne saurait abandonner les nations qui s'arment pour une juste cause, tous ces témoignages d'une libre adhésion à la politique de Sa Majesté ont profondément touché le gouvernement et je suis heureux d'avoir à témoigner à l'épiscopat sa vive reconnaissance.' (Maurain, op. cit., pp. 91-92.)

uncertain. The same Party have forbidden the erection of any more stone sedilia in the southern walls of Chancels for Priests, Deacon & Subdeacon, thus breaking through a national tradition of 1500 years, and substituting a mean working bench in their place. The same party would make war on all canopy work over stalls, thus making it impossible to reproduce one of the grandest features of a mediaeval Church: they maintain also that stained Glass is contrary to the decrees of the Congregation of Rites, as it is impossible to hide it during Benediction of the B. Sacrament. In fine the Ultramontane Party openly declare that they will never rest till they have crushed the Gothic Revival, and substituted upon its ruins all the ritual and architectural developments of *Modern Italy*. Hence instead of presenting a united front to the enemies of Truth, the English Catholics are divided into 2 opposite camps, and those, who dislike the degradations of the last three centuries are almost forced to the alternative of swallowing them in the cup of orthodoxy or of sympathizing with Schism in the attempt to get rid of them. I still hope that we shall weather this storm, as we have done so many others, but it is sad that such an one should have been raised at all, and that too by men who have come so recently among us; but unluckily the greater part of the late converts were professional writers and they are animated with all that violence that characterizes the modern Press, whether religious or irreligious. Let us however hope that our infant Church may avoid the rock that threatens her.

It was very gratifying to me to read the kind expressions you put in your Letter about my two Eldest Sons: I can assure you I feel deeply grateful to you and to Madame de Montalembert for all the kindness and hospitality you shewed them, when they were in Paris: and they will always look back upon it, as one of the brightest recollections of their early youth. I think of sending Ambrose back to Paris in January, and my wife and I have a sort of plan to bring our four eldest girls to Paris in February for a couple of months that they may have some *Masters* &c. I hardly know whether this plan is likely to be realized, but I cannot tell you how I long for it, that I may have an opportunity of seeing you again. I am very *very* happy at the idea of your coming to England next summer: if you do you must come with Madame de Montalembert and your Daughters to pay us a good visit at Grace Dieu: we can take you all in, as the house has been considerably enlarged since you saw it. How charming it would be for us: and we would have some nice Catholics to meet you, and we could make expeditions to see all the rising Catholicity of the Central Portion of England.

But now I must bring my Letter to a close, assuring you that no one sympathizes more than myself with all your theories and ideas, even in the midst of any practical divergence in our application of them. My Wife unites with me in warmest remembrances and I am ever

My dearest Friend, your devotedly attached Brother

Ambrose Lisle Phillipps.



# WORDS FAIL ME

OR

## The Visual Element in Communication—Loss or Gain<sup>1</sup>

By HARMAN GRISEWOOD

SOME who visited the Mediterranean recently may have been surprised at what has happened to the sea-bather; he was formerly gregarious, carefree and sportive, bobbing in and out of the water and throwing rubber toys to his companions; but the sea-bather this season was intent and solitary, setting out with harpoon and knife to explore the romance and dangers of the marine abysses. Miss Bloomer and the bicycle brought about a portentous change in our recreational life 100 years ago, but there is a reason why M. Cousteau and the aqua-lung are likely to prove even more significant. They have powerful allies in the cinema, the television screen and the little strip cartoons. It is my hope that the relatedness of these may arouse a curiosity in my subject. It seems clear that the human being is highly responsive to visual entertainment and that we can easily stimulate an appetite that grows by what it feeds on. The holiday-maker today induces no satiety by beginning the morning with the strip cartoon, by gazing at the submarine wrecks and coloured fish in the afternoon hours, and by spending the evening at the cinema or in front of a television screen. Words, mere words, *do* fail to exert anything like the same devouring attractiveness as the picture.

The strip cartoon was started in the U.S.A. during the 1860s to inform and entertain the immigrant masses from Europe whose only common language was the pictorial image. But the strip cartoon is having a second spring and the stimulus is a very different one. It was invented for those who couldn't read and it flourishes today for those who don't want to. It started as an acknowledged second best for the pitiable illiterate; it is now cherished by those who can of course read perfectly well but who prefer the visual element in communication.

About £110 million is spent in this country each year on going to the cinema. About 25 million people go each week, of whom 4.1 million are children under sixteen. In Britain in 1947 there were 33,000 television licence-holders. Seven years later there are 3½ million—a hundred times as many—out of 36 million adults. In U.S.A. the rate of growth has been a little faster. In 1947 there were 200,000 television receivers and now there are 32 million. The average use per week of a

<sup>1</sup> A paper read to the Newman Association in London, October 1954.



television set in the U.S.A. is 21 hours—three hours a day. In Britain the comparable figure is about seven hours—one hour a day. It is clear that we are dealing with a vast and still rapidly developing extension of the visual and the pictorial. I won't offer you statistical evidence to suggest how far this growth is at the expense of the purely literary and the purely aural. No exact measurement is possible. But as human leisure and time available for human activity is constant, it is clear that the visual element has gained enormously and is still gaining.

It may be complained that all that has been said so far is that nowadays people look more and talk and read less. This, you may say, is no more significant than other changes of taste—eating less meat and more vegetables or drinking less wine and more spirits. But these changes have their importance as mutants or agents of change in a culture. I have thrust upon your notice four visual activities or modern preoccupations, each with a new and remarkable power to capture and hold the attention—the strip cartoon, under-sea bathing, television and the cinema. The natural effect of associating these four activities and giving them some social or moral context is to suggest alarm or anxiety; that is because the impression made upon the civilized mind is one of decline. The alarm is of course at a dismal prospect of barbarization, at the frustration of our most expensive and elaborate educational efforts. We have hardly yet taught our people to read and write and yet here is this new visual excitement upon us like some enticing apple orchard to the whole world of schoolboys. The alphabet and the first primer—what chance have they now? And what chance, too, have we now to make our world safe for democracy if the people can't or won't read? The average voter was perhaps never a great reader but he was in a fair way to become quite a good listener and beginning to be pretty well informed. But from now on perhaps we must imagine him settling his own fate and ours with even less attention to the news and with a mind filled—filled to capacity—with dreams of cinema stars and space-ships. We may well shrink at the thought of our future being in the hands of these. I believe fears of this kind easily startle us when we hear of more and more addiction to the visual and pictorial. I would like to discuss the grounds for such apprehensions and to try to define them somewhat.

We think of the literary world as the civilized world—the illiterate as barbarous; so any flight from the word seems by all our training to be a simple regression towards a barbarism. Our conditioning has been so much in favour of this view that we don't take much thought to reach this conclusion. It fits the general pattern of decline which some world historians have lodged in our minds, and is thus congenial to the pervasive mood of civilizational despondency.

But there are two points I notice in this melancholy picture, one of which does somewhat relieve the gloom. First, nothing in our history

suggests that you get very far in the development of ideas without a highly wrought skill in words—the two do seem justifiably associated. But secondly, I remark that never at any one time has a large proportion of the community possessed much skill in words. A large vocabulary and the ability to use it has been the property of very few.

True it has latterly been the determined hope of our community—in the last eighty years or so—that many more people, most people in fact, will come to an educated man's use of words and habits of reading. We hope this because we believe in the refinement of ideas, of our ideas, and we believe that these can be best communicated by words. That's why it matters to us. We want to see a wider spread of our ideas and we distrust the notion of an élite. What do we mean by an educated man's use of words? We think probably of the language of, say, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* as an educated person's language. Well, if our hope was ever to universalize that standard we certainly have a long way to go. Our educational techniques have continued long enough now and been widely enough applied to give grounds for doubt whether that standard—the educated man's use of English—can ever be universalized. But it would be to relinquish something very precious to many of us and something vital to the egalitarians if this particular hope had to be abandoned and the attempt to realize it called off. Taking the anthropologist's or world historian's point of view, it may seem remarkable to some that the endeavour was ever seriously entertained. What is generally known of the world's civilizations brings nothing to encourage a belief in the successful outcome of efforts to universalize an educated man's use of his native tongue. In our own culture, if we were to fail now we would see this episode as a typical manifestation of late Victorian hopefulness—which came to grief in the violence of the next century.

But this disenchantment—it is possible—may give us the truth. It may seem absurdly millennialist to the grandchildren of our own little boys and girls to have expected that words should be used with sensitivity and power by more than a very few—a few who will thereby be able to understand and discuss the development and refinement of ideas. If that realization were to come about or anything like it we would be less shocked than we are prone to be now at the flight from the word and at the popular supremacy of the picture, and above all of the moving picture.

The tendency of the human mind using words is to analyse and explain; to begin with a statement and then to discuss the statement; to make other related statements and to achieve thus a connected argument which gives the mind repose or prompts it to action. This is the world of rational discourse; speech and written words are the supreme and natural instrument of the human reason. Our use of words, it is often remarked, is witness to our human property—Reason—and it is

our ability to reason and to prove it in words which distinguishes us from the rest of the animal world. It is worth remarking too, perhaps, that the great human heresy Rationalism was the product of an intensely literary age and implies a dependence solely upon concepts which are demonstrable in words. The chief heresiarch was language. By contrast the appeal of the picture is not at once to the reason but to the senses and to the imagination. The pictorial is not necessarily at odds with the rational. But there is an hidden antagonism at one remove—a war between the imagination and logic. It is true that a good picture is as rational as a good syllogism but it is not only rational. It is sensual and irrational in its means of communication and very often in its content. It includes the rational, but exceeds it.

And I think we arrive here at one of the strongest reasons why the pictorial has so strong an appeal at this particular time. Remember our conscious acquaintance with the unconscious is only about fifty years old. The first encounter was a repulsive shock. We are only just now getting on terms with the unconscious as a reality. The unconscious is not easily demonstrable in words. It is a dream world, a world of image and symbol. It affects the reason, yes, but not first of all the reason. It affects the emotions and the imagination. It is, too, a private world. The faculty of reason is demonstrative by its nature. But the fantasia of the unconscious is private, inexplicable, solitary, delightful or nauseating. I believe that the bather who leaves his rubber ring or his game of cricket on the sands and who plunges alone to the cold silent rocks, does so because he sees there some correspondence with a recently discovered self—a self purely sensuous, mysterious, and freed from the torments of reason and causality. This world of the marine abysses, remember, is a very similar world to that of surrealist painting and other 'irrational' styles. And do you not recognize some of this characteristic of the dream in another entrancing world—the world of the cinema film? A world of violent swift-moving action. I was interested by Suzanne Langer's remarks about the cinema at the end of her new book *Feeling and Form*:

The percipient of a moving picture sees with the camera; his standpoint moves with it, his mind is pervasively present. The camera is his eye (as the microphone is his ear—and there is no reason why a mind's eye and a mind's ear must always stay together). He takes the place of the dreamer, but in a perfectly objectified dream—that is, he is not in the story. The work has the appearance of a dream, a unified, continuously passing, significant apparition.

I believe the trail we have followed leads to a position roughly like this: the communication made in words is essentially rational—it explains or it prompts to action. Its elaboration and refinement needs

a good deal of capacity and hard work. This difficulty is concealed from most since most of us—using, as we do, words all the time—tend to be pretty well satisfied each with his own word-world. In the world of words, though we may believe that travel broadens the mind, we don't really intend to make the effort to leave home. But the communication made pictorially seems to involve less effort; it does not, essentially, set out to explain anything or to prompt to action but to interest the imagination or more directly to give pleasure. It is more sensual and less rational, more towards enjoyment, more private and more self-contained. It is a communication directly of the physical as it appears to the human eye without comment by the human reason.

So perhaps the contrast that we have to make is not between two equal modes or forms of communication—words and pictures—but between two very different modes; one with a natural attraction to logic and reason and one with an attraction to the imagination and to the unconscious. I doubt if a comparison of the two corresponding arts will be illuminating—poetry and painting. They have a basic equality because they are both arts, which fact prevents one gaining an ascendancy—except momentarily perhaps or locally—over another. The reason for this is, I believe, that in the use of their media, each art has to strain against the nature of the medium, or rather you might say each has to push the medium to a limit which seems uncongenial to it or at any rate unfamiliar. The poet's use of language is not at all the same as any other man's; it is not a normal use of language. It is adapted for the purposes of art—which are not like other purposes. The logician is not supreme in the poet's thought, and language on the poet's typewriter responds not to Reason but to whatever we call the poet's faculty, let us say the Imagination.

On the other hand, the visual element to the painter is first of all the whole world of natural objects—no combination of which will ever produce the picture that is a work of art. This world of natural sights has to be transmuted in the painter's eye and objectified by the painter's skill—to become something which is not a natural sight at all but an artist's sight, composite and constructed and charged as no sight in nature is charged with meaning beyond that of the natural object. So, under the tyrannous rule of art the visual has to become amenable to reason and comes to resemble discourse; whereas language is freed from reason and is used imaginatively like image and symbol.

So you might conclude—gratefully, I hope—that none of these changes we have been alluding to will affect the arts; they are safe with their own special rules. Well, roughly, I think that's true. But there is a great deal which is mistaken for the arts about which the proposition is not true at all.

In his work *The Dehumanisation of Art*, Ortega y Gasset has the following:

The majority of people are unable to adjust their attention to the glass and the transparency which is the work of art; instead they penetrate through it to wallow passionately in the human reality which the work of art refers to. If they are invited to let loose their prey and fix their attention upon the work of art itself, they will say they see nothing in it, because indeed, they see no human realities there, but only artistic transparencies, pure essences.

Sometimes the wallowing isn't very passionate; the bath proves no more than tepid and the intending wallower abbreviates the experience. But long or short—wallow or dip—the penetration through the glass is to mistake the artist's intention altogether and this, I think, happens on a vast scale.

In the cinema and in the world of sub-art the penetration through the glass is deliberately solicited; Alice is made to come back again—through the glass to the real world of the black kitten and the ball of wool. The transparency is worn so thin as hardly to exist. You can't help going through it. It is the illusion of reality that is intended and contrived with great dexterity. The contrivers of these entertainments forsake the rôle of artist and become the providers, or provokers, of certain emotions and illusions; their aim is incitement and the effect is not aesthetic at all but is an illusion of real feeling. An 'I was there' sense of actuality is induced. This I think is what Suzanne Langer means by her likeness of the cinema with the dream world and with 'apparition'. The visual element in this sort of entertainment has a big pull over the merely literary. The propensity to pleasure of the visual can quickly carry it to heights of excitement by comparison with which the word alone is left stumbling on the dusty plains. And so in this world of popular-pleasure art, the visual element does indeed outstrip the literary and a great deal more is communicated and more excitingly than in words only. It is clearly important to make what distinctions we can between this type of substitutional art and art work proper.

But it is probably in the communication of ideas that the greatest effect will be felt of the ascendancy of the visual. And here, too, we must make and maintain certain important distinctions which words alone and thinking with words can bring about. The effort to make intellectual distinctions is never popular because it is puzzling to the mind and is arduous. People like to move the distinction on to the plane of feeling where the emotions make the distinctions between guilty or not guilty, fair or unfair, good-for-the-country or not good-for-the-country. I do not mean that feeling is effortless; it exercises indeed the whole person, but it is not arduous. It is not against the grain of our slothful natures. The emotional judgement is much easier to reach. The process is often little more than is contained in the phrase 'letting yourself go'—that will itself produce emotional decisions and judge-

ments often quite rapidly and with a sense of release. But such judgement or decision is rarely in accord with what the intellect will see to be the facts of the case; nor will it often accord with justice or prudence. To apply these virtues needs a lot of trouble, and will, to some degree, involve the subjugation of the emotions. There is nothing new in all this of course. I mention it only because the dangers in this familiar situation are, I think, aggravated by the tendency we have been considering. The ascendancy of the visual in our society as we now actually experience it is a move towards popular pleasure and towards effortlessness and ease. There is of course no harm whatever in recreation itself and no harm in pleasure as such, but there *is* harm—harm to truth—in mistaking entertainment for exercise of another sort; there *is* harm in mistaking the communication of enjoyment for the communication of ideas in logical form; there *is* harm in blurring the distinction between intellect and feeling and in so relaxing the muscles necessary for wise judgement that we can no longer make the effort required. And this failure is I believe possible if we don't refine visual impressions and discipline our visual faculties as we have done in the case of words so as to produce for example the priceless professional vocabularies of the sciences. We could lose and coarsen these through using language for only elementary purposes as when, abroad, you don't know a language very well and use it only for ordering meals or for explosions of feeling at railway stations or hotels. We would read our newspapers too in much the same way, understanding most of the simple startling headline vocabulary; reading but little of the smaller type; and turning gratefully and quickly to the pictures—to the *lingua franca* of the visual element. So I would conclude there is some danger—not great perhaps—of corruption in our language by an addiction to the pleasures of the visual and this could come about by sheer neglect or more insidiously by confusing the two rôles of intellect and emotion, and the two rôles of analysis and of recreation.

The visual in the sense of the pictorial means of communication is capable of carrying more information, but its tendency is to deliver this information less exactly; the subjective quality is much greater. The pictorial element is much more sensuous and exciting and calls into play much more of the human faculties than words only. Therefore the responsibility for interpretation is greater.

A limitation to the visual element is that it does not discuss; it states realities in different conditions and modes and phases, but it is not the instrument with which a human being will abstract a quality and consider it and, having done so, apply this quality with restraint and discrimination to the concrete order of things. The instrument apt for this activity is language, not pictures.

Language singles out things and qualities by naming them and it expresses the arrangement of things and qualities by a corresponding



arrangement of words; it can abstract qualities from things and apply them and thus a man using language can make and communicate judgements and take decisions. But pictures and images represent the things themselves to the sight, and the perfection and end of this sort of communication is, I believe, simply the contemplation of the object in as much of its reality as the human being can contain.

And that I believe is why we associate pictures with pleasure and language with use, pictures with play and language with work. This preference for delight as opposed to toil is indeed the right order of things, but we are not yet in Heaven; we are fallen creatures of concupiscence, and language is here and now our necessary means for communication. We cannot substitute pictures for language without loss—loss in terms of necessary rational arrangements—but equally we cannot forgo pictures altogether. Iconoclasm was indeed a real heresy. Pictures, too, are a proper form of communication but they tend to communicate differently and to communicate different things. Of the two we must note that language is intermediate but a necessary intermediate between exterior reality and ourselves—the pictorial is more direct and comparatively immediate but has the dangers and drawbacks and lack-of-fulfilment of the *immediate* while we are in our sublunary *intermediate* state.

If these reflections are at all true we are likely to retain at any rate this amount of anxiety at the increase of the pictorial element. Any general replacement of verbal communication by the pictorial would be regressive. But there is no reason to suppose that this is what is going to happen. It may be that we are approaching what is a more normal state in which the largest number of people eagerly seek pleasure and recreation; and this recreational state is afforded more variously and more excitingly by the world of the visual—newly made available by modern techniques—than by words. This form of communication is very different from that which is typical of words. The picture is a physical communication of one reality to another—incomplete, mysterious, contemplative. Discourse is conceptual, more exact but more limited; descriptive, analytic, capable of coarse degradation but also of sublime refinement and comprehension. Yet this highly developed state is rather a luxury product and within the grasp of few. It can never be placed on an egalitarian basis.

It seems to me that our type of culture is in its technical aspect still rational and Roman. We depend to a large extent upon exact adjustments of arrangements and machines and upon rational calculation of all kinds. The refinement and articulation of our language as communication is vital to us. And though I don't think it necessary that very large numbers of people should attain to an educated man's use of language, none the less the idea of it should be popular. It should be a goal. We can't afford to coarsen our ideas and our analytic use of

language very far without our techniques becoming coarsened too. And we are vitally dependent on their further elaboration and success. So I believe it important to cherish the development and sensitivity of verbal communication. And I don't believe that the picture is substitutional. The picture is for something else. It has the more powerful attraction. We must see to it that we seek from it not only pleasure but wisdom and reality. If we do so it will yield a greater reality than words. There is an interesting passage in St. Augustine where he says of the arts: *visio est tota merces*. The only reward that an artist must expect is the vision. And vision too is our word for the celestial state; the reward we hope for at the end of our earthly life is not a book but a vision.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### SAINT AURELIUS AUGUSTINE

*Augustinus Magister.* (2 vols. Paris, Etudes Augustiniennes. 4000 frs.)

*Augustine: Earlier Writings* (Library of Christian Classics, Vol. VI).

Translated by J. H. S. Burleigh. (S.C.M. Press. 30s.)

It is a commonplace that, just as St. Thomas was wrong about the Immaculate Conception, so St. Augustine was wrong (as he afterwards admitted) when he thought that *beata vita*, the fullness of human felicity, could be obtained in this world. He was wrong, too, though he never corrected himself, in thinking that unbaptized infants suffer after death the everlasting pains of hell. After all, the illumination granted to Doctors of the Church is different in kind from the inspiration of the canonical writers, and carries no guarantee of inerrancy. Therefore Jansenius was ill-advised to take the anti-Pelagian treatises as the rule of faith in his account of the theology of grace; but this was no mere personal deviation from common sense, as Fr. Ceysens shows in his contribution to *Augustinus Magister* (pp. 1069–1076). There was a real *drame de conscience* in the seventeenth century for Catholics whose personal apprehension of St. Paul was ineradicably Augustinian, when they saw reason to fear that the *Schola* and the *magisterium* would be committed to a humanistic theology incompatible with their interpretation of revealed truth.

All that is now matter of history. But an analogous conflict of ideas is discernible today, and comes near to the surface in connexion with the two books under review, especially when the first-named is re-read in the light of discussions at the Augustinian Congress (Paris, September 1954) for which it was compiled. Professor Allers's paper (pp. 477–90) puts the question whether the Augustinian philosophy is acceptable as a true working account of reality; his conclusion is frankly negative, since he insists on the need to jettison the theory of 'illumination', without which the Saint's philosophical position would, simply, not be Augustinian. But from this conclusion—and for one reason or another it is generally accepted—it follows that, in philosophy, Augustine must be read with suspension of belief, even if with interest and admiration. Then again, the *congressistes* were of one mind in

acclaiming the proposition that any attempt to fit the Saint's theology into scholastic categories was not only hopeless but misconceived: this must mean that Catholic teachers of divinity, obliged to conform with the schools, have to divorce the historical significance of Augustine from his magisterial authority. Even in regard to what is called 'theology of history', many thoughtful scholars would prefer to restrict their valuation of the *City of God* to the context of its original composition. But in violent contrast to this tendency (to make the study of St. Augustine exclusively antiquarian) the Student Christian Movement Press brings out a collection of treatises of St. Augustine translated into English, because the Christian classics are 'an inheritance that must be reclaimed by each generation', even 'in modern times, with the increasing inability even of those trained in universities and theological colleges to read Latin' (p. 9). (The present volume is to be followed by two more, selected from the later works.) Professor Burleigh has done his work well, though he seems to have lost patience with the book *De Vera Religione*, falling here repeatedly away from his own standards of elegance and fidelity to shades of meaning. It is perhaps a matter for regret that he did not include *De Beata Vita* as well as *De Magistro*, and that his introductory notes are so very laconic. The average reader of such a book as this would surely be grateful for a few pointers, e.g. towards the slow growth, through the Manichean controversy, of those basic notions of God—*noverim Te*—which later served to keep the Saint's theology on an even keel in the storms of the Pelagian crisis.

For it is in these undertones and overtones, the *aspects minoritaires* of the Saint's writings (as Professor Nédoncelle described them in his paper for the Congress—pp. 595–602), that we may look most confidently for a fruitful progress of Augustinian studies, 'reclaiming' there our proper share in the common 'inheritance'. And it is exactly because so many of the papers in *Augustinus Magister* explore these less obvious topics that it may well come to be recognized as the most valuable contribution of our generation to Augustinian studies.

N. J. A.

### THE 'MAKERS OF CHRISTENDOM'

*The Western Fathers.* Translated and edited by F. R. Hoare. (Sheed and Ward. 18s.)

*The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany.* Translated and edited by C. H. Talbot. (Sheed and Ward. 16s.)

*Saint Boniface.* (Buckfast Abbey Chronicle. 2s. 6d.)

*Winnfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas.* By Theodor Schieffer. (Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau. 15.80 DM.)

ALL these books are concerned with the building up of Christian Europe and all except the first with Boniface's outstanding part in that unparalleled transmutation of heterogeneous elements. For all the patient research of recent years, there is still need of much more light on the Dark Ages, and that which is here provided will greatly help students and stimulate the devotion of Christians long after the centenary of Boniface.

Mr. Christopher Dawson is the general editor of what promises to be a magnificent series of volumes of documentation describing the lives and activities of the 'Makers of Christendom'. One would have welcomed a foreword from him, at least in the first volume, and it would be interesting to have more details of the biographies still to come; but for the boldness of the venture there can be nothing but praise. The publishers are to be congratulated also on keeping the prices so low.

The century in which Augustine lived is important, not only for the clash of barbarism with a Rome recently and uneasily converted, but also for the beginnings of monasticism. Communities vowed to a more perfect way of life had existed long before this, but the more definite organization of the religious life and its clear distinction from the lay state belong to the period from 350 to 450. All those whose lives Mr. Hoare has so ably translated and introduced—Saints Martin of Tours, Augustine of Hippo, Honoratus of Arles, Germanus of Auxerre and Ambrose—had much to do with laying the foundations of monasticism. The authors of these lives have some right also to be considered as the founders of hagiography: what offends us in popular lives of the saints today was then fresh and attractive, even if the material has to be used with caution.

The English and the German lives of Boniface provide abundant evidence for the assertion of Mr. Talbot in his brief and interesting introduction to *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*: 'The great turning-point in the history of the West goes back to the conversion of England' (p. xv). This truth is in turn the justification for publishing a new translation of the biographies of Saints Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba and Lebuin and of St. Boniface's correspondence. Willibald's life of St. Boniface is faulty in many respects—when he has no facts to relate he fills out his narrative with rhetorical and pious generalities—but with the correspondence it must be considered the main source of our knowledge of the man who most effectively welded the Frankish Empire and the Papacy into the unity we know as the Christian West. The letters are particularly illuminating and have a direct appeal to the modern reader which is less evident in the stereotyped biographies. Among them is the advice of Bishop Daniel on converting the heathen by arguments simpler than those of St. Thomas Aquinas but more adapted to the keen minds of the Greeks than to the

simple understanding of Saxon warriors; on the other hand, there is Pope Gregory II's amazing concession of a second wife to a man unable to remain continent during the sickness of his first; and, like many another devoted son of the Papacy since that time, Boniface finds the heathen and unsociable practices in Rome a severe handicap to his teaching of the true faith.

Making good use of these letters and such sources as are available for the general history of the times, both modern biographers depict the Papacy as aware indeed of its divinely granted authority but as—perhaps inevitably—lacking an understanding of the grandeur of the rôle now offered to it. The Popes recall in conventional style the Petrine promises, they encourage Boniface with more than formal approval, but for a long time their hopes are based more on the increasingly ineffective Byzantine Empire than on the youthful ardour and apostolic spirit of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

As the Buckfast study particularly stresses, it was the diocesan organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church and its firm loyalty to Rome which provided Boniface with a pattern and an inspiration in his gaining of new territories for the faith and set an example for the unification of Western Christendom. 'The close co-operation with Rome, the political protection afforded by the rulers of the Franks, and the many Anglo-Saxon volunteers for the continental mission, were the three broad foundations keyed together by the master mason, Boniface, upon which the structure of the Church in Germany was raised' (p. 24). But close co-operation with Rome was an Anglo-Saxon habit exported and established in other regions mainly through the efforts of Boniface himself. This brief study succeeds in bringing out the many-sided activity of the saint and his historical significance. It deserves a more permanent form.

Herr Schieffer's work is an example of German scholarship at its best. It is large and full, based on a thorough examination of all the materials, but readable and lively, full of sound and balanced judgements. Particularly refreshing is his insistence on the limitations of the title 'Apostle of the Germans':

The values of gratitude and admiration which are sounded in it are in their emotional spontaneity a real and permanent gain, but historians have had to question whether this characteristic touches the essential historical significance of Winfrid-Boniface. In spite of the striking scenes at Geismar and Dokkum the simple conversion of the heathens takes up only a limited space in his epoch-making missionary achievement. There is no single person to whom the title of Apostle of Germany belongs exclusively or merely in the first place. The Christianization of the German lands, which began with the power of assimilation of the Roman provincial church organization, was distributed over many centuries and numerous—



mainly anonymous—forces; when he won over the pagan remnants in Hesse and Thuringia Boniface merely closed up the last breach in the unity of the Frankish kingdom of that time. But even the concept 'German' can be linked with Boniface only with the utmost reserve, no matter how strong was his Germanic-Saxon self-consciousness, accompanied as it was by a lively dislike of the Slavs whom he did not attempt to bring over to Christianity even when they settled as serfs on the lands of Christian masters. It is easy, but very misleading, to describe the spheres of activity of the Irish-Scottish, Frankish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries as 'France' and 'Germany' or even as 'Belgium, Switzerland, Austria'. We have quite deliberately avoided these expressions, even in geographical nomenclature, for they are all political rather than geographical or ethnical concepts and spring from later—indeed, very much later—times; they have also a suggestive emotional content that is not compatible with a clear, historical outlook (pp. 284-85).

The real grandeur of Boniface's achievement, his response to the needs and conditions of the time, is admirably brought out. The Papacy was too weak to find its own appointed path: the loyal son of the Rome-bound Anglo-Saxon Church had to guide it thither by his constant and humble appeals for papal directives, thus setting an example to the easy-going Frankish clergy, who began to appeal also against the decisions of the assiduous legate. But the Popes did learn from him. When Boniface first appeared on the continent of Europe, they were looking towards the East, aware indeed that they were the heirs to the Petrine promises but exercising their universal powers by favour of the Emperor and for the most part behaving as the holders of a comparatively unimportant metropolitan see (Herr Schieffer calls it a *Rumpfatriarchat* and a *Reliktgebilde*). Before he died, the Papacy was definitely committed to the West and a new era in the relations of Church and State had dawned. New problems arose also and Emperors continued with the aid of subservient clerics to claim powers which Popes were reluctant to concede, but Byzantinism was finished and the principle of the superior authority of the Church clearly acknowledged.

This German work was published opportunely for the centenary of Boniface. Any translation is bound to take a considerable time to appear, but it is to be hoped that there will still be sufficient interest in this country to justify a publisher in embarking on the enterprise. For it can be regarded as the nearest possible approach to a definitive biography and as a masterly and exciting survey of the factors which brought about the foundation of what must still be called the Holy Roman Empire.

EDWARD QUINN

## BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

*Aspects of Buddhism.* By Henri de Lubac, S.J. (Sheed & Ward. 12s. 6d.)

IN this book Fr. de Lubac presents us with three comparative studies of Buddhism. The first deals with Buddhist ideas of *maitrī* and *karuṇa* usually regarded as the Buddhist equivalent of charity: the second compares cosmic trees in Buddhism and Christianity, while the last compares the different manifestations of our Lord and the Buddha. The theme of the book appears to be that whereas superficial resemblances can be found in the Buddhist and Christian scriptures, these resemblances remain superficial, and doctrinally the two religions are poles apart. In the latter two essays this seems perfectly clear. In the first case it is not immediately apparent, but Fr. de Lubac does well to insist on the essential difference between the Buddhist idea of 'compassion' and the Christian idea of charity.

It is doubtful whether it is right to insist overmuch on the fantastic and mythical nature of the Buddhist stories illustrating compassion and selflessness; for the Buddha was simply adopting an idiom best suited to his own India where the line between fantasy and fact is never clearly drawn, and where what seems to us grotesque hyperbole is an accepted convention. The sounder criticism (which Fr. de Lubac also makes) is that the Buddhist idea of charity in the sense of giving, knows absolutely no bounds, and in the end becomes positively immoral if we are really to take these stories literally and give our wives and children away as servants. The real difference between Christian charity and its Buddhist counterpart is that the Incarnation sanctifies Man and brings him into the Divine Order and therefore obliges the Christian to love his fellow-men, whereas for the Buddhist a man is simply a collection of attributes attaching to no permanent substance or self. He is to be pitied for not realizing that he has no self, but cannot in any real sense be the object of love. Compassion and generosity are subjectively a useful technique for realizing the 'truth' that there is no such thing as self; but if there is any human warmth in the feeling, this must be resisted, for it militates against the Buddhist idea of detachment. The real difference, in fact, is that whereas the Incarnation and the life on earth of our Lord are the twin bases on which Christian ethics are built, in Buddhism there is always a contradiction between the doctrines of 'the impermanence of all things' and the 'not-self' on the one hand and the ethical teaching of compassion and kindness to all living things on the other. In the Hīnayāna this is latent, but in the Mahāyāna metaphysics develops more and more in a nihilistic direction, while, with the introduction of the Bodhisattva idea, an ever higher standard of compassion and selflessness is demanded in the purely moral sphere. The salient difference between Buddhism and Christianity, then, seems

to be that, in the latter, metaphysics and ethics together form a cohesive whole, while in the former they start by being in uneasy agreement and drift ever further apart. Fr. de Lubac makes these points with admirable clarity, and has thus made a significant contribution to the comparative study of religions. The translation by Mr. George Lamb is excellent; but it is a pity that the Sanskrit misprints of the French edition have not been corrected and that the proofs do not appear to have been checked by anyone with a knowledge of Greek.

R. C. ZAEHNER

### ORIENTAL LITERATURE

*Literatures of the East: An Appreciation.* Edited by Eric B. Ceadel. Introduction by A. J. Arberry. (Murray. 8s. 6d.)

THE object of this little book, so the editor's preface informs us, is 'to give a balanced and clear description of each [Oriental] literature'; and Professor Arberry, in his introduction, feels free 'to boast' of the achievement of the contributors. The book is, in fact, a symposium by seven Cambridge Orientalists, each of whom was set the task 'of describing the salient characteristics of seven literatures of Asia'. To do this well five things would seem to be necessary—sound scholarship, concision, clarity, ability to disentangle the essential from the fortuitous, and an understanding of the alien mentalities at work behind these literatures. These qualities are rarely found in one person. The first quality may be assumed to be present in all seven contributors. The other, no less important, qualities are present in very varying degrees. It was charitable to include the fragmentary literature of the pre-Moslem and non-Moslem Iranians in such a collection at all; for this is in no sense a great literature. It is a subject for the specialist and has little or no general interest. There should be no place for it here; nor indeed can there be if, as the author of this section (seriously?) recommends, the *Gātāhs* of Zoroaster should be made available to the public 'in the original language, without translation'! Poor public.

As a short introduction to the other six literatures (Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Ancient Indian, Chinese, and Japanese), that on Hebrew is outstanding. Admittedly this study confines itself to the Old Testament, but it does succeed not only in putting this all too familiar material into its historical setting, but in enabling us to penetrate into the mind of the ancient Hebrews. This may be a misreading of the purpose of this particular volume, but as an attempt, in an incredibly small compass, to re-create the ancient text for us against the background of modern discoveries, it is wholly admirable.

The sections on Persian, Chinese, and Japanese literature are competent, and do at least stimulate the layman's interest—and that, after

all, is the sole justification of the book. The article on Arabic is curious. It gives the impression that the author was not quite sure how to set about his difficult task for the reason, as it clearly emerges, that he finds himself out of sympathy with Moslems in general, and the Arabs in particular. This is a very comprehensible attitude, but is scarcely calculated to arouse an interest in Arabic studies: and this would appear to be the purpose of the book. These latent defects are all too patent in the article on ancient Indian literature: for how can one condone a contribution in a book such as this, at the very outset of which the contributor, whose task it was to present the 'salient characteristics' of ancient Indian literature, calmly informs us that he proposes to disregard the whole Sanskrit element proper. He just is not interested in the Indian classics—neither their philosophy, their drama, nor their sometimes exquisite poetry. This is about as sensible as to confine a study of Greek literature to Homer, Hesiod, and the Homeric Hymns. It is not sensible at all: and it almost seems as if the dry, and intrinsically boring, farrago of philology has been inserted with the intention to repel. For who is going to interest himself in what the contributor calls 'a kind of textual chess with a thousand unfinished moves'? Most people have more serious things to do and more important things to think about. This article is, however, significant in that it throws a lurid light on the ever-widening gulf that separates specialized scholarship from what in better days was known as the 'humanities'. The specialist, of course, has his specialized work to do: no one grudges him that, for it is the basis on which fruitful scholarship must build. He should, however, refrain from sneering at "literary" literature, particularly in a book that claims to be dealing with precisely that. He should have some sense of proportion. Orientalists, alas, are all too often and all too literally *désorientés*.

R. C. ZAEHNER

### SOPHOCLES

*The Life and Work of Sophocles.* By F. J. H. Letters. (Sheed & Ward. 18s.)

INTERPRETING Sophocles is at present one of the most fashionable occupations for classical scholars. Since the war there has been a succession of books and articles (particularly in Germany, Holland, and the English-speaking countries) giving the most varied and often incompatible accounts of his art and thought—or, according to some, absence of thought. Mr. Letters' book is a worthwhile addition to this literature. It falls into two parts, of which the second is occupied by a detailed analysis and discussion of the seven extant plays. The first begins with a not very satisfactory chapter, "The Time", in which Mr. Letters attempts

the impossible task of compressing an account of fifth-century Athens for the classically uneducated reader into thirty-five pages. The result is necessarily superficial and at times misleading. Kitto's excellent Pelican volume, which probably represents the least space in which the thing can be done at all adequately, is a safer guide. Then follows a chapter, "The Man", giving a highly interesting portrait of Sophocles which unfortunately goes well beyond the reliable evidence and depends too much on literary gossip, contemporary or Hellenistic. The next two chapters are more important and very much better. "The Poet" is an admirable piece of clear and concentrated literary criticism: and in "The Dramatist" Mr. Letters gives an account of the tragedian's dramatic art and his thought, treated together as they should be, which is developed and supplemented in the discussions of the several plays which follow. These discussions are perhaps the most valuable part of the book; they have much to give to the classical scholar who is more than a mere pedant, and should provide a great deal of help for the general reader.

With much of what Mr. Letters says about the thought of Sophocles I am in complete agreement. He is entirely right on the main point, in that he presents Sophocles as a thoroughly religious writer, with a faith which is very much more than conventional piety and which informs all his plays. He is right, too, when he says 'certainly, unlike Æschylus and Euripides in their different ways, he does not probe the obscurities and difficulties of natural theology. He does not attempt to prove its truths so much as to commend them by illustration. . . . When a religious dramatist holds the beliefs of his age he will be ostensive rather than defensive' (p. 117). But I think he is still a little too much inclined to make out that Sophocles is concerned to give an intelligible and acceptable account of the workings of divine providence, to justify the ways of the gods to men. It seems to me (and to a number of better qualified scholars) that Sophocles is not concerned to do anything of the kind. The whole power and depth of the ancient religion of which he is the greatest spokesman lies in its being a religion without theodicy. Sophocles appears to me to present the dealings of the gods with men at their most terrifying and mysterious (the fate of Œdipus, for instance) without softening, explanation or apology: and at the same time to make us feel by force of faith and art that there is an eternal law and a good divine will behind the horror, that all is somehow well and the universe not ruled by blind chance or a fantastic, arbitrary cruelty. Failure to see this seems to me sometimes to distort Mr. Letters' interpretation of the plays. In the *Trachiniae* he thinks that Sophocles meant his audience to advert to a part of the story (the apotheosis of Heracles) of which there is no hint in the play, and which I think the dramatist deliberately left out of account so as to show the dealings of Zeus with Heracles, and with Deianeira (for whom even the full story holds no

hope or mercy) as impenetrably mysterious. And throughout he lays much too much stress on the importance of the future life for Sophocles. There were people in the fifth century who drew from the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition the sure and certain hope of an immortality in which the injustices of this life would be righted and its evil purged away. But they spoke a very different language from that of Sophocles, and I can find no real evidence in what remains of his work that he held any such belief. In his universe men are called to be noble without hope and devout without reward. His gods acknowledge no obligations to men, still less do they generously lavish on them a share in the divine life. They punish more than they reward, and their greatest mercy is an easy death at last and admission to the melancholy communion of ghosts. Even the closing splendours of the *Coloneus* hold out no more hope than this. But in spite of this measure of disagreement I do not think anyone can read Mr. Letters' account of the plays without an increase in understanding and enjoyment, and a deeper insight into the thought of the greatest religious dramatist of Greece.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

### THINGS THAT GO BUMP

*Ghosts and Poltergeists.* By Herbert Thurston, S.J. Edited by J. H. Crehan, S.J. (Burns Oates & Washbourne. 16s.)

THE title of this book is somewhat misleading, for there is little in it about ghosts other than poltergeists, ghosts that appear visibly. There is, in fact, but one study of this type of ghost, the mediaeval apparition of a deceased Provençal in the fourteenth century, Guy de Torno, investigated most carefully by a local Dominican, Prior John Goby, and most certainly authentic.

The book, however, is none the worse for this restriction of subject. On the contrary. Poltergeist phenomena require a study to themselves. The collection of instances drawn from every part of the globe and from many centuries, the extent and probative value of the evidence carefully weighed, render these collected papers a sufficient dossier of one of the best-attested but at the same time most unaccountable classes of abnormal phenomena in human experience. Had Fr. Thurston been able to give us the full-length study he intended, we should indeed have gained many more most interesting accounts, but nothing substantial would or could have been added to the weight of evidence for the occurrence and nature of poltergeist manifestations as here told. This book should become and continue a classic on the subject.

As Fr. Thurston points out, although the poltergeist phenomena are so widely distributed in time and space, and despite the fact that until recently those who experience and attest them had no knowledge of



similar happenings elsewhere on which to fake their own, the phenomena everywhere exhibit the same features. Objects, often stones or domestic utensils, are hurled through the air, or the latter removed from their places. These things occur in full daylight with many witnesses, when it is quite certain there is no human agent to move the objects. The missiles describe paths which, were they thrown by the hand, they could not possibly take, circling around, turning corners, retracing their path. They are seen only as they approach their objective, never when starting their motion. They seem to materialize in space. Objects carefully shut, even locked, away, nevertheless escape and fly around or are otherwise deposited elsewhere. One material object, that is to say, penetrates another. The object moved would therefore seem to be dematerialized to rematerialize as it approaches its goal.

As Giraldus Cambrensis already noticed to his astonishment, holy objects—holy water, for example, or the prayers and ritual of the Church—are of no avail to bring the phenomena to an end. Only in the case of an Indian Catholic, Mr. Pillay of Madras, did the disturbances cease with the conclusion of a novena to St. Joseph. Before this, however, Bibles, crucifixes, holy pictures and holy medals had been removed or flung away.

In Ireland, an open Bible placed on a bed by a Methodist, and a lamp lent by a Catholic neighbour, which a priest had blessed with holy water, proved equally powerless. The Bible was removed and torn, the lamp stolen. There is also often physical violence. The victims are dragged out of bed at times; some children, for example, at Bristol in the eighteenth century, bruised and pinched. On the other hand, there are limits to the poltergeist's mischief. No life is ever lost, no serious bodily injury inflicted. Stones or other heavy objects which make a beeline for a person, at the point of contact fall harmlessly to the ground. If fires are started, as they often are, they occur at such a time and place that they can be extinguished. There is, however, at least one exceptional instance of a house burned out. When (it is comparatively seldom the case) a poltergeist speaks, it is often at pains to point out that it refrains from inflicting serious damage to person or property. 'It only does it to annoy, because it knows it teases.' To abuse the poltergeist, or threaten it as an evil spirit, annoys it and renders it more mischievous than before.

Another remarkable and important feature is that the disturbances in the majority of cases are focussed upon a human storm-centre, a child or adolescent, and his or her departure at once brings them to an end. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that this person, this medium, even if sometimes he adds to the phenomena for the fun of the thing, cannot produce them by normal human agency, has often an unbreakable alibi, or is under observation when a manifestation occurs. What are we to conclude? Fr. Thurston, though making it clear that the evi-

dence for these occurrences is far too strong, too widespread, and too uniform, for reasonable rejection, abstains from any positive explanation. Though he does not reject outright the belief formerly accepted without question by Catholics and Protestants alike, that the phenomena are of diabolic origin, he is dubious.

The present reviewer is convinced that the poltergeist is not an evil spirit, and this for two reasons. The first is the low mentality displayed. These tricks of loutish practical jokers are not what we should expect from angelic intelligences, even fallen. True, this consideration is not conclusive. It could be replied that the penalty of intellectual pride is the tastes of a moron. But there is a more cogent objection, the moral character of the poltergeist. It is not, to be sure, good. He is always mischievous, frequently obscene. But his obscenity is that of the half-wit who scrawls indecencies in a public lavatory. And, as we have seen, his mischief is strictly limited. If devils are no worse than these poltergeists, they are far less wicked than a truly evil man. Compared with the atrocities committed by men—the wholesale murder of Jews, for example, the rape and murder of children, area bombing—the petty naughtiness of the poltergeist is more white than black. Man's behaviour is too often Satanic, diabolic. The behaviour of the poltergeist cannot be so described. If men never behaved worse, the world would be a far better place than it is. There is, however, nothing to suggest the action of a deceased person. Nor, apart from these comparatively rare phenomena, is there any evidence that non-human spirits other than devils or angels exist.

The most likely hypothesis in the reviewer's opinion is that the phenomena are, in fact, caused by the childish or adolescent medium. Their intellectual and moral character agrees with that of the average child or adolescent whose subconscious, moreover, even if repressed, is often distinctly indecent. But he or she does not, cannot, produce them in the normal way or even consciously. A force telepathic, and above all telekinetic, must emanate from his or her subconscious sufficiently powerful to move heavy objects or, on occasion, human bodies. Strong men have struggled, often in vain, to prevent the victim, who may also be the agent, from being, for example, dragged from bed. Moreover, this force, whether spiritual or subtly material, is able to dematerialize objects and rematerialize them, not to speak of making them move and come to rest at will. We know today that solid objects are, in fact, far from solid, consisting of electrons moving about in empty space—in short, fields of energy. It should not, therefore, be so difficult to conceive that an energy from outside can disintegrate and reintegrate these constellations of energy, so that one solid can pass through another.

Furthermore, I would claim that these phenomena corroborate my conviction that all things created are energies material or spiritual, and

that the latter differ from the former not as being completely different but as higher, richer, more real, and therefore more internally integrated energies within a scale of degrees.

In such a universe, I submit, the sufficiently attested operations of the poltergeist, though the *modus operandi* is still unknown, are at least conceivable in principle; no longer, as they have been hitherto, a scandal to the intellect. Nor is it so astonishing that man's subconscious should resist successfully sacred ceremonies and objects, since his conscious volition is so lamentably effective in doing so. That the person emitting this energy must be a child or adolescent may be due to one or all of the following reasons. The release of the energy is in some way connected with puberty. The adult life of conscious reason and purpose has not yet repressed subconscious activity. The desire to produce such phenomena is due to the mischievous playfulness characteristic of the immature, be they animals or human beings, but normally outgrown with years. It may be added that the appearance of objects not conveyed by a human hand is not confined to the poltergeist. It also occurs at spiritualist séances, and occasionally among the miracles of saints.

E. I. WATKIN

#### AUTOCRITIQUE?

*A History of France.* By Lucien Romier. Translated and completed by A. L. Rowse. (Macmillan & Co. 30s.)

THE further one reads into this book the more aware one is made of the amount of truth in the saying that all history is contemporary history. For there hangs over Romier's reading of his country's past the dominating, if unacknowledged, spectre of France's uncertain fortunes and equivocal standing in the world of the mid-twentieth century which contrast so painfully with her past predominance and leadership. In essence the story told in this book is that of the tragedy of unattained national synthesis, unachieved political stability, and unfulfilled national ambitions, originating from the fatal time when the French Monarchy lost its touch with the evolution of the nation. To the lost spirit of mediaeval France and the great days of the Monarchy the author looks back with a nostalgia that was evidently felt as something more than merely academic. It is against a background of decline, failure, and division during the past two and a half centuries that the outstanding cultural eminence of France in European History, and the many gifts that have been bestowed upon the human spirit by the still exceptionally creative and fertile French genius, are—almost parenthetically—recorded.

Lucien Romier was an eminent scholar and publicist who accepted

political office under Vichy but did not survive to see the end of the war. His first historical works, written more than thirty years ago, were of considerable importance. They opened up valuable new approaches to French history in the middle decades of the sixteenth century and threw fresh and revealing light on the origins of the French civil wars. By the time that his short outline history of France up to 1789 was written, however, he had long since moved to wider and more sociological spheres of investigation. Completed by 1939, this history was not published until 1948, when it appeared posthumously under the title *L'Ancienne France des Origines à la Révolution* (Librairie Hachette). But before his death in 1944 Romier had been at work on a continuation and his typescript had reached the year 1885. Mr. A. L. Rowse has translated both the book and the continuation and has added his own rather emotionally written coda on French history since 1885, the whole being published as one continuous narrative.

The book opens with the perhaps somewhat questionable thesis of a well-defined Roman Gaul as the basis both geographically and in other ways of modern France. It is surprising—consequently—to find the question of the eastern frontier and the problem of relations with the Germans and with the middle kingdoms so inadequately dealt with at almost every stage. Even for Germanophil Frenchmen this matter must surely remain one of the greatest historical importance. The tone of the book, however, is not so much Germanophil as Anglophobe. A certain bitterness, manifested in divers ways and in divers passages to which reviewers have not been slow to call attention, is apparent throughout in regard to a more fortunate cross-Channel neighbour whose history shows the happy development of precisely those things for lack of which the old France disappeared—internal unity and stability, both social and political, and a foreign policy successfully and steadily directed towards the prime needs of economic well-being, that is to say towards the interests of commerce and colonial expansion rather than continental aggression. And as if to make the contrast more bitter the assurance of England's success in these respects is seen to be dated from an event, the Revolution of 1688, which synchronized exactly with the moment at which, in Romier's view, the French Monarchy turned a fatal corner with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Romier had enough integrity of mind not to permit superficial doctrines of historical inevitability to give him comfort. Yet his own reiterated assertion that because the French Monarchy had been able to recover its ground after earlier disasters, as under Louis XI and Henry IV, it could equally well have done so in the eighteenth century, is surely itself open to a charge of superficiality. The problems involved in restoring contact between Monarchy and People in the eighteenth century were of quite a different order of magnitude and complexity

from what they had been in the earlier epochs. Half the answer to the query why they were not solved lies in the perceptive and skilful analysis made by Romier himself of the depth of the revolutionary movement of thought and speculation in the eighteenth century. The other half lies in the fact—latent throughout the whole book but never brought adequately to clear analysis—that the Monarchy's failure was not only the failure of particular personalities, but the general failure of the French nation and the French character to develop permanent and accepted institutions through the medium of which the Monarchy could have responded in a normal and automatic way, without revolutionary processes, to the pressure of the times: the lack, in effect, of a Constitution. The question why mediaeval French institutions did not develop into a modern Constitution capable of keeping the Nation coherent within itself and within a monarchical framework, as their English counterparts did, is, in one sense, the whole problem of modern French history. Failure in this respect is perhaps the price which a sensitive, intellectual and spiritual people has had to pay for its triumphs and influence in things of the mind and of the spirit.

These reflections summarize the main impressions left by this book on the mind of the present reviewer. It remains to be said that it is full of interesting passages and reflections and that it is in many ways quite a *tour de force* of compression and lucidity. Of the modern sections, the present reviewer found himself more stimulated by those on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries than those on the sixteenth and seventeenth, parts of which appear surprisingly jejune. But a DUBLIN reviewer may be permitted to regret, in conclusion, that the valuable rôle of French criticism and initiative in the development of the Catholicism of the present day finds little or no place amid the increasing concentration on politics and international relations which, perhaps inevitably, marks the book as it proceeds to its close.

OUTRAM EVENNETT

### CLASSICAL DRAWINGS

*The Drawings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.* By Hylton Thomas. (Faber & Faber. 42s.)

INTEREST in the drawings of Piranesi is almost entirely a phenomenon of this century. Their rarity, a rarity which has always appeared particularly strange in comparison with the considerable graphic production of the great eighteenth-century etcher, has in the past hampered discussion and stimulated prophecy. The prophecies, indeed, made by previous authorities like Giesecke, Focillon, and Hind, were happily vindicated by the appearance of 133 drawings formerly in the collection of the late Mrs. J. P. Morgan, and now in the Pierpont Morgan

Library, New York, where they were the subject of an important exhibition in 1949 and of a useful catalogue compiled by Miss Felice Stampfle. The Pierpont Morgan collection is the largest so far known, since the series in the British Museum is less than half that number, and other collections in Europe and America are still smaller. With the publication of Mr. Hylton Thomas's admirable study of the artist as a draughtsman, based on a doctoral thesis presented to Harvard University in 1949 but developed with a lightness of touch for which the announcement that such a thesis was the foundation of this study might scarcely lead one to hope, it becomes clear that nearly six hundred authentic drawings by Piranesi are now known. The drawings range from the early conventional study of two courtyards in the British Museum, a series of studies for the 'Carceri' clearly under the influence of Tiepolo, the magnificent sketches of Roman antiquities which combine with such brilliance the Venetian delight in atmospheric surface and the Roman command of solidity and grandeur of form, the late severe masterpieces devoted to Pompeii and Paestum, and finally to the figure drawings, studies of movement rather than of anatomy, many of which had been previously attributed to Guardi. To accompany this well-chosen, representative selection, Mr. Thomas has provided a catalogue of the plates and an introduction which is not only an important study of a little-known aspect of Piranesi's work but is an original contribution to the history of eighteenth-century art.

Admiration for the work of Piranesi as a whole is something of a twentieth-century revival. It is understandable that the nineteenth century, with its slackening interest in Baroque and Rococo, and its veering in taste from the art of classical antiquity to that of the mediæval world, should have passed by the artist. Ruskin did not trouble to refer to him and the great catalogues of prints, like Adam von Bartsch's *Peintre Graveur* of 1803-1821 which ran to twenty-one volumes, ignored him. But in 1911, according to a recent study of Piranesi by Mr. Hyatt Mayor, Frederick Wedmore's *Etchings* neatly situated the artist in the life of London by saying that his 'plates are very large: hence unfit, often, for the folio or the hand. But framed, and hung together in a moderate-sized hall, they imply, albeit a little monotonously, that we find ourselves in the dwelling of a cultivated person of the older type.'

Even in the eighteenth century, the artist had aroused enthusiasm chiefly among foreigners. We know that Piranesi relied at times for better or for worse on English patronage—his relationship with Lord Charlemont was on a level with Dr. Johnson and Lord Chesterfield—and that Robert Adam, when he studied in Rome between 1754 and 1757, drew and measured ruins with the older artist. In spite of the fact that no contemporaries appear to have admired Piranesi as an architect—even modern enthusiasm might quail before his Egyptian



chimney-piece—and that his architectural commissions were confined to the remodelling of a few buildings, including the church of the Knights of Malta on the Aventine, it was possible for Horace Walpole in 1771 to exhort English architects to 'study the sublime dreams of Piranesi'. Dreams many of his drawings and prints were, and misguided, many of his archaeological theories, but Mr. Thomas rightly stresses the factual accuracy of Piranesi's archaeological transcriptions. If we wish to know how the so-called sarcophagus of St. Helena, now in the Vatican, looked before its questionable restoration, we must go to the work of Piranesi. 'None of his predecessors had reproduced so thoroughly all the accidents that had befallen Roman monuments since their creation, and the curious and scientific spirit of the age was fascinated by his attempt. In turn his realism could not help but create a more definite mood. The concrete representation of these ruinous edifices overgrown with vegetation and encumbered with the decaying dwellings of the poor, evoked a more poignant image of great age and past grandeur than had been possible with earlier, and more generalized views.'

Today, Piranesi has become 'a part of the lens of every cultivated eye'. Mr. Thomas, by his emphasis on the draughtsman and by his perceptive analysis of Piranesi's development of style, has helped to give definition to our own vision.

JOHN BECKWITH

### ARTIST AND MUSE

*Choir of Muses.* By Etienne Gilson. Translated by Maisie Ward. (Sheed & Ward. 12s. 6d.)

THERE have been in many religions ways of circumventing the mention of the deity's name. One may, if one is clever, regard this as a primitive taboo; if one is simpler or a little more advanced, one may see in it a wise precaution. To speak a Name is to invite a Presence, and then unaccountable things may happen. M. Gilson calls his book after the Muses. In his opening paragraph he speaks of Clio, his own putative Muse, calling her—with rather rash disrespect—'that old lady'. Later he explains that the Nine are not the Muses with which he is concerned, and directs our attention to his proper subject, the part played by a woman in the working life of a creative artist or thinker. Upon these women the author bestows the title of Muse. But despite his restriction, the Nine wait for him in the background, since he has chosen to conjure them, and in the end they undo him.

The book and its subject promise well. There is an interesting similarity of pattern in each of the cases described: the artist sees in a woman the embodied inspiration, as it were, of a work of art which he

is to produce; it is then his part to produce, through a kind of creative passion, the work, while she must nourish the work in him while preserving, as woman, a certain distance. There is much room for inquiry here, for the exact mechanics of the interaction between head and heart have yet to be worked out. It is not a problem which presents itself acutely to ordinary people, who frequently manage their lives well without undue activity of either of those two mysterious organs; but M. Gilson is not dealing with ordinary people. His examples are Petrarch, Baudelaire, Wagner, Comte, Maeterlinck and Goethe. (It is interesting to find Comte in this company, confirming one's suspicions that philosophy and poetry are closely related.) He devotes a chapter each to his examples, and rounds the book off with a general introduction on the Problem of the Muses and two concluding chapters on Art and Eros and the Artist and the Saint. As we should expect from so eminent and, if I may say so, endearing a scholar, he tackles his delicate subject, which he himself defines as 'the living unity between love, art and religion', with admirable humility, caution, learning and plain-speaking. But the Muses conspire against him by means of his very virtues. The difficulty is that the subject matter is, for much of the time, irresistibly and cosmically funny.

I do not mean to suggest that M. Gilson is devoid of humour. Throughout the truly extraordinary stories which he relates he preserves a gentle but perceptible irony, directed, I fancy, a little more often towards the woman in question than the man, but none the less making itself felt. Humour works mainly through association and dissociation, and so there would have been two possibilities in writing this work. The first would have been for the writer to detach himself from the subject matter and to perceive the humour in it, as M. Gilson in fact does. The second would have been to associate himself imaginatively with the fantastic goings-on described here, not denying the humour but prepared to identify himself with it. The latter course appears to be the more dangerous. It is a type of approach which lays one open to enormous and generous follies, as these artists were in their dealings with their recalcitrant work and their still more recalcitrant women; and by the very possibility of enormous lapses in taste and good sense, confers also the possibility of really profound spiritual insight into these problems such as Blake can provide, Goethe, Eric Gill, Keats. The other approach, that of detached observation of the humour in these situations, may seem safer, but the dissociation here substituted for association has curious consequences for the writer, which can be observed in M. Gilson's study. For there engues a strange inversion of things (quite consonant, one realizes a little fearfully, with that saying that the first shall be last and the last first, or that to lose one's life is to find it); by this, qualities produce opposite effects to those intended or expected. The scholar's detachment and clear-

sightedness may produce nothing but obfuscation. This is particularly apparent in the general chapters of this book. They deal with the relationships between art, sex and sanctity, and they are quite lifeless. This is intensely disappointing, but it has a humour of its own.

M. Gilson says over and over again in the course of his work that he is not an artist, and it may be thought I am therefore criticizing him unfairly. But something suggests that any writer of any book might do well to pay his court, though in his own way and in his own terms, to the Muses, as a protection between himself and the cosmic humour which links all forms of fertility together and weds wisdom and folly, and as teachers of the balance between attachment and detachment which is needed for all insight, especially into such great matters, determining 'the clear eye's moiety and the dear heart's part'.

ELIZABETH SEWELL

### THE MONKS AND FRIARS

*Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales.* By David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock. (Longmans. 42s.)

WE have here, from the hands of the two most competent authorities, a complete catalogue of mediaeval religious houses from the Norman Conquest to the dissolution. We are given in a conveniently compact form all the important statistical data regarding foundation, locality, rank or dedication, net income in 1535, and date of dissolution. Where available, other data are added; and in all cases adequate references to the authorities used are appended. Mr. Hadcock is the compiler of the Ordnance map of Monastic Britain.

In addition to the catalogue and six maps, there is an introduction comparing this work with previous lists, and a fifty-page chapter on the *Origins and Development of the Religious Life in Great Britain*. Here we are given a scholarly and inspiring account of the extraordinary advance and prosperity of every type of religious life in mediaeval England. We read of the impetus given by the black monks of the eleventh century to intellectual culture and religious fervour, so that they became the most dynamic and most valuable force in the spiritual life of the country. These were followed by a wave of Cluniac foundations, less adaptable to the kings because of their close continental allegiance, but with a command of language, familiarity with the Latin classics and humane width of outlook greater than any that came before or after them. The next important wave was that of the Cistercians, so suited to the robust and enthusiastic character of the north, with St. Ailred, perhaps the most attractive Englishman of his century. At the end of the twelfth century, the black and white monks declined in popularity,

and they were succeeded in popular estimation by the various orders of canons. Round about this time there arose a novel religious Order, half monk and half soldier, in the Knights Templars and Knights Hospitallers.

But the greatest revival since the days of the early monks came with the arrival of the friars. These brought 'into the religious life of the age an enthusiasm and a simplicity . . . which had perhaps never before been displayed before the eyes of the common people of all nations'. They rapidly spread into all the towns, and gave rise to a wave of conversions. Most brilliant of all their centres was the world-famous Franciscan School at Oxford, the most conspicuous focus of English intellectual life in its time.

Professor Knowles also traces for us the story of the hospitals, found in their hundreds throughout mediaeval England. They may not have been medically very adequate, but are 'an impressive witness to the strength of the desire to give physical health to those in need of it, which has sometimes been overlooked in pictures of medieval religion'.

In the last period before the Reformation, there is the growth of the new family of contemplatives, notably the charterhouses, which never lost their first fervour until the end, and which gave a home to the highest spiritual endeavour of the late Middle Ages.

Professor Knowles ends his account with a few general statistics. The population in the religious houses was greatest about 1300. It declined sadly through the black death and its consequences. However, contrary to common belief, it rose again rapidly afterwards, and at the time of the dissolution had reached three-quarters the figure of its maximum strength.

There is no need to underline the historical importance of this work. It must have involved an incredible amount of labour, and all libraries will be grateful to have so much valuable historical data in so compact and convenient a compass.

H. FRANCIS DAVIS

### MEDIAEVAL EUROPE

*Medieval Essays.* By Christopher Dawson. (Sheed & Ward. 16s.)

*Héloïse and Abélard.* By Etienne Gilson. (Hollis & Carter. 16s.)

THESE two fine books by two distinguished Catholic mediaevalists, the one a long-overdue reprint of the studies in mediaeval culture first published in 1934 under the title of *Medieval Religion* with certain additional essays, and the other a translation of M. Gilson's lectures at the Sorbonne in 1939, are complementary, for the two great lovers are representative of the intellectual and literary ideals of the twelfth-century Renaissance, the age both of the cathedral schools and the troubadours.

The theme of Mr. Dawson's book is to be found in his introductory essay, where he makes the passionate plea that the one hope for the world lies in giving the Christian culture of the Middle Ages (from which our own, in spite of its predominantly secular character, originated) the same place in education as that held until recently by the classics. His essay on the fall of the Roman Empire, written twenty-five years ago, is even more relevant today, owing to the striking parallels between the end of the classical world and our own age so forcibly brought home to us during the war and post-war period, with the result that St. Augustine's *City of God* has once more become a tract for the times. After centuries of barbarism a new civilization was created out of the fusion between two alien traditions and societies, the Christian Church and the barbarians. The former had inherited both the universality and organization and the Hellenic culture of the Roman Empire, and a new essay is devoted to the very important contribution of the Near East to both orthodox and Western Christianity. The dynamic of mediaeval civilization was due to the impossibility of amalgamation and harmony between two different societies, the one spiritual, disciplined, orderly and universal and the other warlike, anarchical and particularist, and its development and ultimate disruption was determined by the latent and unresolved conflict between them. In a world in which the clergy were the only literate class, and land practically the only form of wealth, ecclesiastics naturally played a big part in politics. If the Carolingian Empire marks the Church's success in transmitting Roman and Christian ideals to the barbarian converts, it also meant the creation of a rival universal institution which made either a State Church or a Church State inevitable. The monastic reform movement, of which both Cluny and Cîteaux are characteristic products, and the reformed Papacy under Gregory VII and his successors saved the Church from secularization and dependence on the State and created a Christian Commonwealth and a Christian culture.

The studies of mediaeval theology, science and literature, where Mr. Dawson makes a brilliant and comprehensive synthesis, not only of his own considerable knowledge of the original sources, but of recent Continental research, form the core of the book. A new essay shows the importance of the Moslem West, not only in the transmission of Greek philosophy, medicine and science and in its original contribution to these subjects, but in the intrusion of a new pagan and secular outlook into mediaeval literature, life and thought. Some of Mr. Dawson's conclusions are exceedingly penetrating and suggestive. In spite of its debt to the Graeco-Syrian Dionysius 'the Areopagite', and St. Augustine, Western mysticism was, owing to St. Bernard's influence, profoundly original in making love and not knowledge the basis of the mystical life and in concentrating on the humanity rather than on the divinity of Christ. Mr. Dawson also emphasizes how much mediaeval

science owed to the Arab and Jewish Neoplatonists and suggests that Bacon's originality lay in his modern approach to science. Whilst his contemporaries regarded it as a form of magic, he saw its utilitarian value, and also its destructive potentialities in warfare, unless subject to moral and social control. The two themes of the essays on mediaeval literature are the combination of Christian ideas and the fundamental loyalties and outlook of the warrior caste in the *Chansons de Geste*; and the widespread influence of the troubadour movement (the Arab origin of which Mr. Dawson accepts) on mediaeval vernacular poetry, particularly that of Dante. Like most historians he believes that mediaeval civilization reached its full spiritual, intellectual, literary and artistic achievement in the thirteenth century, and that, although the fourteenth century was an intensely religious age, it was 'no longer spiritually constructive' because it had no centre for its religious aspirations. 'The age of St. Louis and St. Francis had been succeeded by that of Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII', and whereas in the past the reformers had been champions of the Papacy, they now felt that it had betrayed them. The political responsibilities assumed by the Church, owing to the backwardness of the barbarians, caused a loss of spirituality; it was this, in combination with the development of the national state, which destroyed the unity of mediaeval Christendom. The general disillusionment is expressed in the search for some new Messiah displayed in the eschatological speculations of the Franciscan Spirituals, in the exaltation of the secular power by Dante, Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua, and in 'the tepid constitutionalism' of the Conciliar movement. The last essay which is on 'Piers Plowman' ends with the prophetic call of Langland (the one poet of genius 'to voice the discontents of the submerged world of the common people' and 'representing not the official view of the theologian and scholar but of the ordinary English people, formed by nearly a thousand years of Christian faith') to his fellows to make a last stand for Catholic unity and the Church of Christ. Such is the general theme of Mr. Dawson's book, but it is impossible in a short review to give an adequate survey of all its different facets.

Although the story of Héloïse and Abélard has become a stock romantic theme, M. Gilson's interpretation of it is both arresting and convincing, since it is based entirely on the *Historia Calamitatum* and their letters, the genuineness of which he accepts. The frankness of the two great lovers, and the strength of their personalities, provide ammunition for a characteristic attack on the protagonists of the view that the Renaissance set men free from the restraints of convention and enabled them to be individuals. Héloïse was by far the stronger, nobler and more original character and it is she who dominates the book. Her intellectual honesty, clear-sightedness and absolute unselfishness make the callousness and egotism of Abélard only the more conspicuous. She



is a fascinating mixture of a blue-stocking and a woman with a great capacity for love and sacrifice, and her attitude was due as much to her intellectual background and the literary conventions of the age as to an all-absorbing and overmastering passion. The mediaeval idea of the true philosopher was based on St. Jerome's description of Seneca, and continence was regarded as part of the philosophic life as much as of the monastic. Thus, Héloïse by allowing Abélard to seduce her had made him untrue to his vocation, and her joy and satisfaction in their mutual love soon gave place to remorse. Her opposition to their marriage was due to the feeling that, quite apart from any effect it might have on Abélard's career (M. Gilson is convinced it would have had none), the result would be merely to perpetuate their sin by converting a temporary lapse into a permanent legal relationship. Hence her passionate repudiation of it, and her willingness to become a nun at his command. Another motive was the 'amour courtois' of the troubadours, which made a love which sought satisfaction or return seem ungenerous and mercenary. Thus, Héloïse assumed the veil as an act of sacrifice to Abélard and to atone for the wrong she had done him, and according to him rushed towards the high altar at Argenteuil with the lines from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, where Cornelia reproaches herself for her sin against Pompey, on her lips. Her adoption of a career for which she felt no vocation, but rather distaste, since it thwarted her natural inclinations and separated her physically from Abélard, whilst sharing in spirit in all the vicissitudes of his troubled and stormy life, gave her no satisfaction, but rather the reverse. Her apparent success in it added to her bitterness, for she felt that the admiration aroused by her prayers, penances, and exemplary religious life was a sham. The whole thing was sheer hypocrisy and not even efficacious, because her motive was not love of God. Her strong feeling of indignation at His injustice in allowing Abélard to be mutilated when they had both abandoned their sin made her reject Him rather than turn to Him in repentance and confidence. Their letters show that Abélard's more conventional mind was shocked by the complete honesty and humility of her self-analysis and that her refusal to convert their relationship into one more suitable to their religious profession irritated him, whilst she in turn was angered by his inability to understand or sympathize with her attitude. In spite of M. Gilson's attempts to justify him, it is only during the last years of his life, when the broken and disgraced man found a refuge in Cluny, that Abélard rises to the tragic and heroic level of Héloïse. Peter the Venerable's beautiful and sympathetic letter to her after his death, and his final words of comfort 'Christ is sheltering him in his bosom in your place as a second you', ends the great tragedy on a note of peace and reconciliation. Although there is no evidence, it is possible to share M. Gilson's hope that after Abélard's death Héloïse's dark night of the spirit ended, and she was able to turn to the eternal

love of which all earthly affections are a shadow and a reflexion. His justification in re-telling one of the greatest love stories of the world is his understanding, not only of its psychological interest, but of its spiritual significance as the path of two great souls to God.

D. L. DOUIE

### COMPARATIVE LITURGOLOGY

- A. BAUMSTARK, *Liturgie Comparée: Principes et Méthodes pour l'étude historique des Liturgies Chrétiennes*, 3<sup>e</sup> éd. revue par Dom Bernard Botte, O.S.B. (Collection Irenikon, Editions de Chevetogne. 165 fr. B., or: 1150 fr. Fr.)

LITURGISTS will greatly welcome this new edition of the late Professor Baumstark's important work *Liturgie Comparée*, of which the first two editions soon went out of print. These lectures, as the sub-title of the first (1939) edition indicated, were given at Amay, and in French, which was also chosen as the language of publication.

This new third edition has a new sub-title: 'Principes et Méthodes pour l'étude historique des Liturgies Chrétiennes'; although the book is not, and does not claim to be, a methodical manual for the history of liturgies, it nevertheless includes important general principles and valuable directives for method, which justify the reviser's choice of sub-title. This sub-title indeed seemed necessary, for the work is far more than a comparative history of Christian Liturgies.

Dom Botte, who is responsible for this edition, provides an accurate appreciation of the author's work in his Preface. After praising this great scholar's encyclopaedic knowledge, which was only equalled by his ability in synthesis, Dom Botte does not hesitate to expose his limitations: 'he did not always see the dividing line between historical reality and his own hypotheses'. Hence the reviser has added notes of his own, initialled, and in brackets, when the author's text maintains positions which seem evidently incorrect. In my opinion these notes are, in general, very accurate and of great value. Being short for the most part, they hardly affect the layout of type of the earlier editions, but the numbering of pages is different by about five or six.

The bibliography has been brought up to date, on the whole, at least for the principal sources. But it is regrettable that, for the Mozarabic Liturgy for example, the author never had access to the manuscripts themselves, but was content to study them in printed sources only: there can be little doubt that, had it been otherwise, he would have contributed more to our knowledge of it and made some discoveries himself. But it is only fair to remind ourselves that one man, even though a specialist in the huge field of Christian Liturgies, cannot do everything himself. Baumstark was attracted specially by the

Eastern Liturgies, and it is thanks to his profound, first-hand knowledge of the manuscript sources and their actual realization in the East, that we now possess the best results of his knowledge of what we may call Comparative Liturgy.

LOUIS BROU, O.S.B.

### HUYSMANS

*The First Decadent: Being the Strange Life of J.-K. Huysmans.* By James Laver. (Faber & Faber. 25s.)

MR. JAMES LAVER's indisputable powers of description and a quite remarkable use of dramatic effect are in great evidence in this history of the novelist and art critic Joris Karl Huysmans and of a host of others besides. Yet Huysmans merits a book to himself. He was one of the foremost literary men of his day, a man of high courage and conviction, of wide interests and scholarship. As Mr. Laver says, his books are still read. Huysmans was, and is, a leader of men. As, in 1874, he stood on the threshold of manhood he looked out over a world of change. In many of its aspects he grew vitally concerned. After half abandoning Baudelaire, he became engrossed in Taine's *Intelligence*, in Claude Bernard's *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*, in Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's brilliant novels on disease, in Emile Zola. Influenced by them he wrote his first novels, *Marthe*, *Sœurs Vatar* and *En Ménage*. Crudity is to be found there but does not constitute the substance of the novels, which are scientifico-literary investigations into human behaviour determined by heredity and by environment, on an ascending social scale. Balzac had discovered a diversity of passions; Huysmans, not unlike Flaubert, found one universal trait: a gross want of intelligence—*bêtise*. This conclusion is essential to an understanding of Huysmans' celebrated *Art Moderne* (1882). It is far more revealing, more mature, than the trilogy; it shows a detestation of moneyed ignorance, a hatred of *bourgeois* prejudice, an active sympathy with genius unrecognized. Realizing instinctively the intrinsic value of the pictures of the Impressionists, he battled on their behalf to obtain just recognition and praise. In so doing he disclosed unsuspected emotional energies and formidable powers of expression. Overnight he became and remained one of the great art critics of the eighties, an arbiter of art.<sup>1</sup>

Art had always a fascination for Huysmans. Initially he exhibited a taste for that of the Japanese. His superb analyses of the work of the Impressionist group sprang in part from an informed consideration of the nexus between it and Far Eastern art. The sense of perspective in Caillebotte, in Degas, and J. L. Forain's graceful curves have primarily no

<sup>1</sup> Similarly in *A Rebours*, Mallarmé in defiance of public hostility is magnificently defended, poetically analysed, justified.

other origin. Hokosai is enthroned in *A Rebours*, and in an essay on *Le Monstre*, included in *Certains*, alongside Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and French mediaeval monsters all learnedly described, due place is accorded to Japanese representations. In a characteristic mood of high sincerity, a new survey of contemporary tendencies to include Satanism, published in 1891 under the title of *Là-Bas*, was begun; but not before oriental curiosity had brought him to his knees before a cathedral and had, momentarily, held him there.

Mr. Laver does not much enjoy *En Route* and half implies that a similar reception was accorded to the book by guests at the Marshal de MacMahon's shooting parties at his *château*. But the Marshal died two years before the publication of the autobiography, which was warmly appreciated by the guests of that valiant soldier's widow. This I was told by the family forty years later in that self-same country house, and in the telling there was a feeling of commendable pride. Towards the end of Mr. Laver's *Life* other, graver, inaccuracies appear. Quotations from Dom Dubourg's *Huysmans intime* are a case in point. Between biographist and biographee there is almost no sympathy and Huysmans' character suffers in consequence. His Catholic novels *La Cathédrale* and *L'Oblat* exercised so powerful an influence that Charles Maurras cried out in despair at the consoling effect they produced in the hearts of many compatriots who made in increasing numbers their peace with the Church; while Emile Mâle found inspiration in them for his magnificent scholarly undertakings.

HELEN TRUDGIAN

### BAUDELAIRE AND RIVIÈRE

*Baudelaire: A study of his Poetry.* By Martin Turnell. (Hamish Hamilton. 21s.)

*Rivière.* (Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought). By Martin Turnell. (Bowes and Bowes. 6s.)

AFTER *The Classical Moment* and *The Novel in France*, brilliant studies of certain particular aspects of French literature, Mr. Martin Turnell has turned to the study of two individual writers differing widely from each other and both important, not only to students of literature but to all whose view of life reaches beyond the superficial. Baudelaire, an enigmatic figure, has never ceased to exercise a certain fascination over Englishmen. Mr. Turnell considers him, with Racine, the greatest master of the single line in French poetry. Jacques Rivière, whose untimely death in 1925 closed what promised to be a distinguished literary career, is practically unknown in this country except to specialists.

To turn first to the work on Baudelaire, to whose 'poetic alchemy' Mr. Turnell is sensitive to a degree rare in an English critic, and whose

colour and imagery he brings to life for the reader. The book opens with a discussion of the poet's achievement in the face of peculiarly difficult circumstances, pointing out that before he could begin to write poetry at all, he had first to create an atmosphere in which it was possible to write. This it is which lies behind much of Baudelaire's indictment of a hostile world. Moreover, the evils that he attacked are still with us, and so it is not surprising that his poetry should continue to exercise its attraction in the world of today. 'It was Baudelaire's consciousness of the worth of the individual soul which was being destroyed that makes his view of the modern world a tragic one . . .' (p. 192). And the rootlessness of our world is clearly reflected in *Les Petites Vieilles*.

Baudelaire Mr. Turnell classifies as a counter-romantic, borrowing T. S. Eliot's phrase, and the book shows how in his case the non-religious 'mysticism' (using the word in the wide sense) which he shared with Nerval and Rimbaud existed side by side with a substratum of Christianity and a certain desire for religious experience. Incidentally, it is pleasant to find Gérard de Nerval for once given the importance which is his due. The substratum is indeed considerable and in one sense it is not inapt to call Baudelaire a Christian poet, for he had a Christian sense of values. He called good, good—and evil, evil. That he found the good supremely difficult of achievement is true, but at least he did not call good, evil. 'It is not in the last analysis what a poet says but what he does to us that matters,' says Mr. Turnell (p. 39).

Baudelaire's relations with women and their influence on his work are fully discussed and critical problems concerning the chronology and architecture of *Les Fleurs du mal* are examined. Again, we are brought to realize the appositeness of these poems: 'The *Fleurs du mal* is not merely the autobiography of a soul, it is the autobiography of the divided modern man, peering at his reflection in the cracked and misted mirrors of *Bénédiction*, or in the sea, and trying to decide what manner of man he is' (p. 101)—for the tension which Baudelaire felt and expressed is equally the tension of modern man. '... deux postulations simultanées, l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan. . . .' For Baudelaire, it was only in the act of poetic creation that there was any possibility that the tension might be resolved, and it is of this that one must take account in judging *Les Fleurs du mal*.

For Mr. Turnell Baudelaire is not a consistent thinker—his approach is experimental, his appeal lies rather in the formal perfection of his work, in its depth and in what he calls 'poetic alchemy'; also in his timelessness. 'There are moments in reading Baudelaire when we suddenly become conscious that we are listening to the voice not of an individual, but of civilization. . . . "De l'arrière-saison, le rayon jaune et doux"' (p. 143).

This book gives due importance to the work of the French critics

on Baudelaire, considering carefully Laforgue, Feuillerat, François Porché, Peyre, but Mr. Turnell does not fear to differ from them upon occasion, as in the matter of their emphasis upon 'tendresse' (p. 140) and in a criticism of Feuillerat on p. 168. Nor does he omit to state that in his opinion certain famous lines in Baudelaire have been over-rated (p. 128).

The present writer would venture to disagree with the remarks on pp. 147-8 about the Spanish seventeenth century. That Spanish architecture of the period was baroque is true, but the adjective has a slightly pejorative flavour in English and in literature (where savagery and ferocity are not the dominant notes) the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were of course Spain's *siglo de oro*.

The chapter on style is masterly. Versification, syntax, verbs, substantives, adjectives, imagery are in turn discussed. The author examines T. S. Eliot's essay on the Metaphysical Poets in which it was suggested that there is a similarity between the conceits of the English Metaphysical Poets and some of the images used by the French symbolists, Baudelaire being compared with Donne.

The summary on pp. 332-3 shows that the writer is fully aware of Baudelaire's limitations, yet finds his greatness to lie in 'the pervasive charm of the "voix magique"' . . . 'even the minor poems possess an inimitable accent of their own which is unique in nineteenth-century poetry. Open the *Fleurs du mal* at random and begin to read and you find that you go on reading, oblivious of the *défaillances* . . . because you simply cannot stop listening to the "voix magique".'

The book is admirably produced and printed and is completed by an appendix giving a comparison of the contents of the first and second editions of the *Fleurs du mal*, a select bibliography and two indices. Three minor misprints (pp. 123, 139 and 174) should be corrected in future editions.

In the book on Rivière much matter has had to be compressed into a very limited space, but the author does justice to this distinguished writer, so little known in this country. He discusses Rivière's religious difficulties, reflected in his letters to Claudel and Fournier, and the influence on him of Claudel and Gide. Claudel and the author of *A la Trace de Dieu* were temperamentally unable to understand one another, yet Claudel was the man whom Rivière most admired. Rivière's approach to religion was a personal one, his test of truth pragmatic. At the same time he was certainly a sincere seeker after God.

Mr. Turnell points out that the very pragmatism that is dangerous in religion is the essential foundation of literary criticism and it is Rivière's work as a critic that is most valuable, whereas his novels (*Aimée*, *Florence*)<sup>1</sup> are not among his best work. 'It is his honesty and in-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Turnell does not accept Mme Rivière's statement that *Florence* is not autobiographical (p. 37).



tegrity, his sensitive response to his texts, which give Rivière's criticism its balance and which relate him to Baudelaire and Bourget—a critic who has never had his due—and distinguish him from Sainte-Beuve and Taine.' Rivière's criticism of Rimbaud is analysed in some detail and it is pointed out that his hypothesis does 'offer a possible way through the labyrinth of the *Illuminations*'. The writer then goes on to speak of *Le Roman d'Aventure*, showing how far Rivière's theory has been borne out by facts. An analysis of the lecture on *Andromaque* in *Moralisme et littérature* shows that Rivière has understood Racine to an extent to which none of the nineteenth-century critics succeeded in doing (p. 57.)

The author shares Rivière's dislike of Chesterton, whom he accuses of an attempt to bounce us into sharing his convictions. That Chesterton's style is patient of such an interpretation is true, but G.K.C. was a popular writer, writing for a semi-educated public who understood and responded to 'bounce', but to whom formal logic made no appeal.

This brilliant essay deserves to be more attractively printed than it is.

K. POND

#### LIBERALS AND CATHOLICS

*Leopardi*. By Iris Origo. (H. Hamilton. 21s.)

*Giacomo Leopardi*. By J. H. Whitfield. (Blackwell. 25s.)

*Prophecy and Papacy*. By Alec R. Vidler. (S.C.M. Press. 25s.)

*Politics of Belief*. By Philip Spencer. (Faber. 25s.)

*Pio Nono*. By E. E. Y. Hales. (Eyre & Spottiswoode. 25s.)

*Louis Napoleon*. By J. M. Thompson. (Blackwell. 32s. 6d.)

MR. WHITFIELD harps a good deal on the 'intersecting diagonals' of Manzoni and Leopardi. In a wider context, Leopardi and Lamennais form an even more instructive couple. The older man was brought up in a French family whose fortunes and attitudes, as Canon Vidler describes them, are rather like those invented by Balzac for the background of old Grandet, though less spectacularly lucrative. 'Félic' himself grew out of the near-infidelity of the Buonapartist intelligentsia into a somewhat febrile Catholicism which—admittedly in hindsight—never looked quite stable. Leopardi, whose parents were devout, was learning, just about the same time, to hate clergy: but, for all Mr. Whitfield's insistent preoccupations, *La Ginestra* is there to show that he never learnt to suffer gladly the lunatic fringe of 'progress', so that he was no happier with the Liberals than Lamennais with the Blacks. The Marchesa Origo, in a new edition of her delicious and indispensable biography, still keeps effortlessly on the narrow path of a right judgement in these things, and picks her quotations from the *Canti* with the sure touch of a lover. The don protests more, but *turbatur erga plurima* (bombers, socialism . . .), to the point of obscuring the one thing

necessary. There were many unquiet spirits in Christendom in the romantic age, but only one Leopardi—one poet unmistakable among all European poets, even when the lines are heard by the hazard of twiddling on the wireless late at night.

Canon Vidler's *Prophecy and Papacy* may well be the best book ever written about Lamennais's early life, though he, too, interposes a veil of anachronistic considerations between the reader and the object, for he has taken his categories of 'priest' and 'prophet' from the post-mennaisian world of Old Testament criticism. Thus Gregory XVI interests him as embodying many or most of the characteristics found by modern Protestants in the 'priestly code' element of the Pentateuch, while Lamennais (not only on account of *Paroles d'un Croyant*) appears as typical of the 'prophetic' element in Hebrew history written by latitudinarians. There might be no harm in such an exercise, for these categories themselves are deckle-edged, and can be made to overlap reality without violence to truth: but a suspicion remains that the Church's inevitable rejection of *L'Avenir* and its author is better explained in less abstract terms. Lamennais already in 1828 cared more for a certain quite secular political and social theory than for King, Pope or Bishops: 'some sort of a letter from Cardinal Bernetti is announced which engages the bishops "to have confidence in the piety of the king"—as if in France there was a king, as if he could do anything . . . Rome, Rome, where are you? . . . Pray, pray for the church! No doubt, she will not perish . . . but why does one have to repeat this to oneself so often, and so bitterly?' (pp. 134-5). When the conflict sharpened in 1833, he showed where his interests lay: 'Instead of making ourselves the champions of catholicism, let us leave that in the hands of the hierarchy, and present ourselves simply as the men of liberty and humanity. God alone can fight with success for religion against the clergy' (p. 223). What deluded him, and many of his contemporaries, into thinking that mennaisianism was intrinsically religious, was a trick of using quasi-Biblical forms of expression, which came naturally to disciples of Chateaubriand, and coloured their very thoughts and feelings.

From this point of view Louis Veuillot was just as 'prophetic' as Lamennais. His positions in regard to Louis Napoleon, catholic liberalism, the Roman question, and the fleur-de-lys, whether mistaken or not, were magnificent journalism; the man himself showed attributes of sanctity. Mr. Spencer allows so much in his *Politics of Belief*. But Veuillot and his school were significant for history only because, through the use of pulpit terminology, they came to feel their political and social prejudices as religious. Life was kinder to Veuillot than to Lamennais, in sparing him personally the moment of choice between recantation and apostasy, which was deferred for his followers until the condemnation of *L'Action française*.

It is an odd coincidence that *Politics of Belief* should have been published within a week of Mr. Hales's *Pio Nono*, for they deal with the same period of European history, and with many of the same topics, so that the contrast of the authors' methods is particularly striking. Mr. Spencer works with a minimum of information: outside his immediate field he gives an impression of carelessness, calling the constitution of July 1870 *Pater Aeternus*, for instance, and (p. 58) making a silly joke about the genealogy of Christ as though this were traced, in the Gospels, only through our Lady. On questions of French history he writes like a journalist in a hurry, assuming that anti-clericalism under the July Monarchy and popular irreligion in the Second Empire were immediately the fault of contemporary churchmen. Being content with secondary sources, he makes no attempt to penetrate the fog of controversy about the religious condition of the Parisian workers from 1830 to 1870, but contradicts himself as often as he passes from one 'authority' to another (pp. 34, 50, 76, 172). So far as his own opinions appear, they are coloured by a distaste for religion, and a fondness for radical rhetoric—thus *Quanta Cura* and the Syllabus are put in opposition to the 'humanist heritage of Europe'. *Pio Nono* on the other hand takes rank at once among the best productions of contemporary English historiographers dealing with this period, alongside D. W. Brogan's and A. J. P. Taylor's books on France and Germany. Owing less than some of his reviewers pretend to recent disclosures from the Vatican Archives, Hales's originality consists chiefly in opening his eyes to the realities of the Roman question and the Risorgimento as they were, instead of pretending to see them as one would wish they had been. In one point he reveals a pardonable impatience of anti-clerical propaganda by debunking the factitious indignation of so many blinkered hacks over the corruption, tyranny, etc., of the régime of the Papal States before 1846—and in this point has given his critics a welcome bone to crack. For future editions of this standard work, the passage in question (pp. 28–32) might with some advantage be 'recollected in tranquillity'. The present reviewer would also feel more comfortable about the references to Catholicism in France on pp. 40, 131, 152, 203 and 232 if it were somehow made clearer that the industrial proletariat was already by 1848 and remained—for all purposes of practical politics—godless. And there are several misprints, especially of Italian words and names.

The French quotations in Mr. Thompson's *Louis Napoleon* are poorly printed, too: and here again there is a loose phrase about 'the Catholic masses' (on p. 230) that lends itself to misreading. Nothing can make *Napoléon le petit* interesting in the way Pius IX is interesting, but Mr. Thompson manages to compel a degree of sympathy for him, which is a notable achievement for such an objective and conscientious historian.

LAICUS

## TOYNBEE'S THEOLOGY OF HISTORY

*A Study of History*, Vols. VII, VIII, IX, X. By Arnold J. Toynbee.  
(Oxford University Press. £7 10s.)

PROFESSOR TOYNBEE has now completed his *Study of History*. Like its six predecessors the new four volumes are immensely impressive and full of learning. In the main Professor Toynbee adds certain dynamic elements to the historical categories which the earlier volumes deployed. They are by now familiar: history must be studied as history of civilizations. Civilizations move in rhythms of Challenge and Response which are guided by creative minorities. These degenerate into dominant minorities. A 'Time of Troubles' sets in which results in 'parochial States' within the civilization. By the mechanism of 'Withdrawal and Return' the life of a civilization may be saved in spite of the cleavage between the dominant minority adhering to a Universal State and the inner proletariat which embraces a universal religion. Yet at this stage there is the danger of an 'External Proletariat' injecting new ideas, new ways of life and bringing to an end the Universal State.

It is evident that Professor Toynbee has formed his historical categories in a study of Greek and Roman Civilization. It has often been pointed out that in spite of his apparent 'comparative' method he has only sought confirmation of preconceived ideas. The new volumes do not alter Professor Toynbee's fundamental categories; they do, however, give them a little more flesh. Volume VII examines Universal States and Universal Religions; Volume VIII discusses Heroic Ages and Contacts between Civilizations in Space; Volume IX examines Contacts between Civilizations in Time, the Significance of Law and Freedom in History and also the prospects of the Western Civilization. Volume X, finally, contains a self-revealing account under the heading 'The Inspirations of Historians'. I found this section of this massive work particularly informative. One can now form some idea of the author's tools. He certainly has used many, but his choice seems somehow arbitrary. One may ask oneself, how can anyone write a comparative history of civilization without profiting from Vico, Jacob Burckhardt, Max Weber, or Troeltsch, whose names do not figure in Professor Toynbee's ten volumes? I also would have been more convinced of the validity of the author's findings had he chosen to defend himself against such fundamental criticisms as brought forward by Professors Peter Geyl ('Toynbee's System of Civilizations' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. IX, pp. 93-124, New York, 1948) and Lucien Febvre ('Deux Philosophies opportunistes de l'histoire: De Spengler à Toynbee', *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, XLIII, 1936; now reprinted in *Combats pour l'Histoire*, Paris 1953). Toynbee condescends only to reply to some critical remarks in Collingwood's posthumous *Idea of History*

and even this reply does not deal with Collingwood's main objections.

Nobody, who writes such a colossal work, can have read all the books which a parochial sociologist might have found useful for his own particular little corner. But one is struck that no works by Granet or Marc Bloch are mentioned. I have gained the impression that Professor Toynbee, once he was blessed with an intuition, refused to take in anything which might upset his original plan. It is, therefore, not accidental that the original plan of the work remained *unchanged* during twenty years. I should perhaps illustrate this point by another example. There is, if I am not mistaken, only one modern philosophical book which has helped Professor Toynbee to make 'his philosophy' explicit. This book is Bergson's *Les deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*. Certainly a very great book indeed, but it belongs intrinsically, with the rest of the author's work, to a phase that was passing at the beginning of this century. Since that date a powerful *new* philosophy has come into being, for which I mention only the names of Dilthey and Max Scheler as symptomatic. Both have taught us that philosophical structure and historicity must, and can, be brought together. When, however, Professor Toynbee is writing as historian, he is completely unphilosophical, and when he writes as 'philosopher' he is completely unhistorical. He accepts too readily a method which was already dated when he wrote the first line of his *Study*.

In view of this fundamental hesitation to accept Professor Toynbee's method, it would be perhaps unfair to indicate in greater detail the slender hope the author is holding out for us in the future: that the *four* great world religions, still alive, will form some kind of *one* syncretic super-religion to which we all—in West and East—must adhere.

I conclude with Lucien Febvre's criticism of Professor Toynbee which is still as fresh as it was in 1936:

*Et quant à l'affirmation implicite qui se dégage du livre de Toynbee, qu'il ne formule point, mais qu' on sent derrière toutes les pages de son livre: 'L'histoire se répète'—oui. L'histoire se répète, en effet. Dans toute la mesure qu'exprimait ce vieux bibliothécaire d'un Shah agonisant. Le monarque, à la dernière minute de sa vie, aurait tant et tant voulu apprendre toute l'Histoire . . . 'Mon prince, dit le sage vieillard, mon prince, les hommes naissent, aiment et meurent.'*

J. P. MAYER

#### SHORT NOTICE

*St. Thomas More's Eve.* By Jean Plaidy. (Robert Hale. 10s. 6d.)

THIS charming little story of St. Thomas More's life and death will bring pleasure to many of his friends. It is not only charmingly written but it is also written with a more intimate understanding of certain

events in his life than I have seen elsewhere. There are a few mistakes but these do not spoil the truth of the general presentation. Take for instance the account of More's proposal of marriage to the elder sister rather than to the younger with whom he was really in love. What really started the King on his career of royal murder? Perhaps it was the Duke of Buckingham's insult to Wolsey. 'His royal blood was something Henry had never liked; he also possessed riches which Henry liked very much.' The King was a cruel man and continual cruelty became his master.

When Erasmus was in London he condemned our houses. He said the rooms were built in such a way as to allow no ventilation. Our casements let in light but not air; and the houses were so draughty. He said our custom of covering our floors with clay on which we laid rushes, although they were changed, was a harmful one—particularly as in poor cottages those rushes were not changed for twenty years. He said that we ate too much; he said our streets were filthy and a disgrace to a country that called itself civilized. The relations between More and his favourite daughter Margaret Roper are wonderfully brought out, and More's own character too, as one of the greatest and most lovable Englishmen that ever lived. No collection of Moriana will be complete without the addition of this valuable biography.

W. E. C.

#### FRENCH CHRONICLE

FRANCE is in mourning for several of her best-known writers. Colette died in the 'summer' (how unlike the summers that warmed us in her books). As she had lived without religion, so she died without the Church, and was buried with only civil ceremony. Fr. Tesson explains in the *Revue de Paris* (October) the reasons why the Archbishop of Paris refused her family's request for a religious funeral; by an odd coincidence, *Etudes* (October) recalls the poet Francis Jammes, who tried to be her Good Samaritan. Henri Pourrat describes her expression (in the bibliographical review, *J'ai lu*, for September-October): 'No illusions left; a want of gaiety and candour, as though she found life itself neither simple nor happy.' But he gives utterance to the same hope that Jammes felt: 'Colette had breathed too much country air not to have known something of man's true felicity—in the evening scent of the dog-rose, or the whisper of the wind at sundown, when the ribbon-outline of distant mountains comes out of the heat-haze, to draw a new horizon.'

The death of the historian of Christian art, Emile Mâle, was important in a different order of ideas. His three great books on mediaeval art, and *L'Art religieux après le Concile de Trente*, have been the



means of bringing our generation into contact with the very mind and spirit of the artists whose secrets he explored. Perhaps his greatest service was to shew the significance of the Council of Trent itself for an understanding of the artistic renaissance that followed it. Robert Rey, in *Nouvelles littéraires* (14 October), is at pains to acknowledge this debt: 'We knew, of course, that Catholicism, in reaction against the austere charms of the Reformation, set out to win souls through the arts, seeking to adorn these with all the richest graces of beauty, even through the representation of fleshly delights. But who gave the directive? Who laid down the syllabus? Who shewed where to find the texts for the artists to follow? Emile Mâle looked for the answer (and found it) in the sessions of Trent, that ecclesiastical debate that went on for eighteen years (1545-1563), despite local displacements, interruptions, fresh starts . . .' It is worthy of remark that the Holy Father went out of his way to pay a grateful reader's tribute to the memory of Emile Mâle.

Though he was not so famous as Colette or Emile Mâle, René Le Senne's death, at the height of his powers, means a real loss in the field of psychology and ethics. His *Traité de Caractérologie* (1949) is in its way a classic. To call him a 'Christian existentialist', like Louis Lavelle and Gabriel Marcel, is to ignore all sorts of important qualifications, but does approximately indicate the direction of his work. His influence will last, for he was a great teacher, and took the trouble to express himself in clear and forthright French.

Katherine Mansfield has lately passed through a period of neglect in France; our taste has been rather for a more violent kind of writing. She is now coming back into fashion; this may be due in some measure to the effect of Louis Pauwells's book on Gurdjeff. In any case, Anne Marcel's translation of the *Letters* is timely. The author of *Bliss* was first accepted here in terms of a certain gentle attractive melancholy: her delicately satirical wit passed for a transposition of childish mischievousness. Nowadays, readers look rather for tragic qualities, in the work of a woman whom life treated harshly, and who shewed a rare energy in holding her own. So Marcel Arland, writing in the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française* for October, says: 'For all her quiet manner, the first impression she makes on me is of toughness and ferocity . . . Katherine spoke of her own continuous "rebellion"—I would accept the word without reservations, just as readily as her statement that she always wanted to bestow her blessing on whatever she saw. She is as capable of crying with misery and rage, as of feeling "as though you had suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that late afternoon sun". First and foremost, all her life long, she is a heart craving after the streams of living water.'

The Cézanne centenary has received a remarkable degree of enthusiastic attention. This was a useful opportunity to compare and con-

trast the example of the great painter with the trends observable in the work of modern artists: but above all it helped towards a clearer realization of the master's own achievement. To my mind, one of the best essays in this kind was that of Jean Mouton in *La Vie Intellectuelle* (October). He attacks those who confine themselves to their own period as something sufficient to itself, getting so involved in it as to lose any wider prospect. The work of such as Zola, obviously and deliberately *engagé*, hardly survives him: Cézanne, independent of time and circumstance, achieves immortality. Jean Mouton examines Cézanne's tendency to reduce his people or landscapes to the level of 'things' (anticipating the *en-soi* of J-P. Sartre); he faces in this connexion the grave question: 'When Cézanne thus turns real life into "objects", whose justification is simply to be themselves at the highest pitch of intensity, does he thereby sacrifice spiritual values—is he inhuman?' The answer is deliberate and careful; it does justice to the supernatural quality in the art of Cézanne; it seems to me to carry conviction. 'Cézanne's world is, in the truest sense, peopled; not so much with human inhabitants, indeed, as with the work of their hands—fields to scale, roofs squared off, motionless plumes of smoke on the chimneys. The landscape not only bears the marks of human industry: it is governed, co-ordinated in conformity with the vision of successive generations of human eyes that have looked upon it. It carries the depth of all these continual, superimposed contemplations. The suggestion is of finality, rather than beginning; as though the living world froze into a respectful immobility in the presence of its Creator. Thus the landscape of Cézanne, in which the material object comes to its highest fulfilment, is yet deeply spiritualized, reveals something of the essence of reality.' Jean Mouton, too, agrees with André Malraux in comparing Cézanne to mediaeval artists—whose astonishing technical achievements made our modern art possible, but, themselves perhaps 'richer in devotion than in faith', stopped short of emancipation from self-consciousness.

Another of the year's centenaries records the birth of Marshal Lyautey, whom the daily and periodical press is competing to praise. The occasion is relevantly mentioned here for two reasons. First, this great soldier (a friend of Albert de Mun) always insisted, from his earliest years in the service, on the officer's duties and responsibilities towards his fellow-men; secondly, he was—again from his youth up—a first-class writer. Some of his letters published by Grasset are supremely beautiful. Who will give us a detailed study of his spiritual evolution, from a slack or perfunctory catholicism to the full profession of a living faith?

LOUIS CHAIGNE



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